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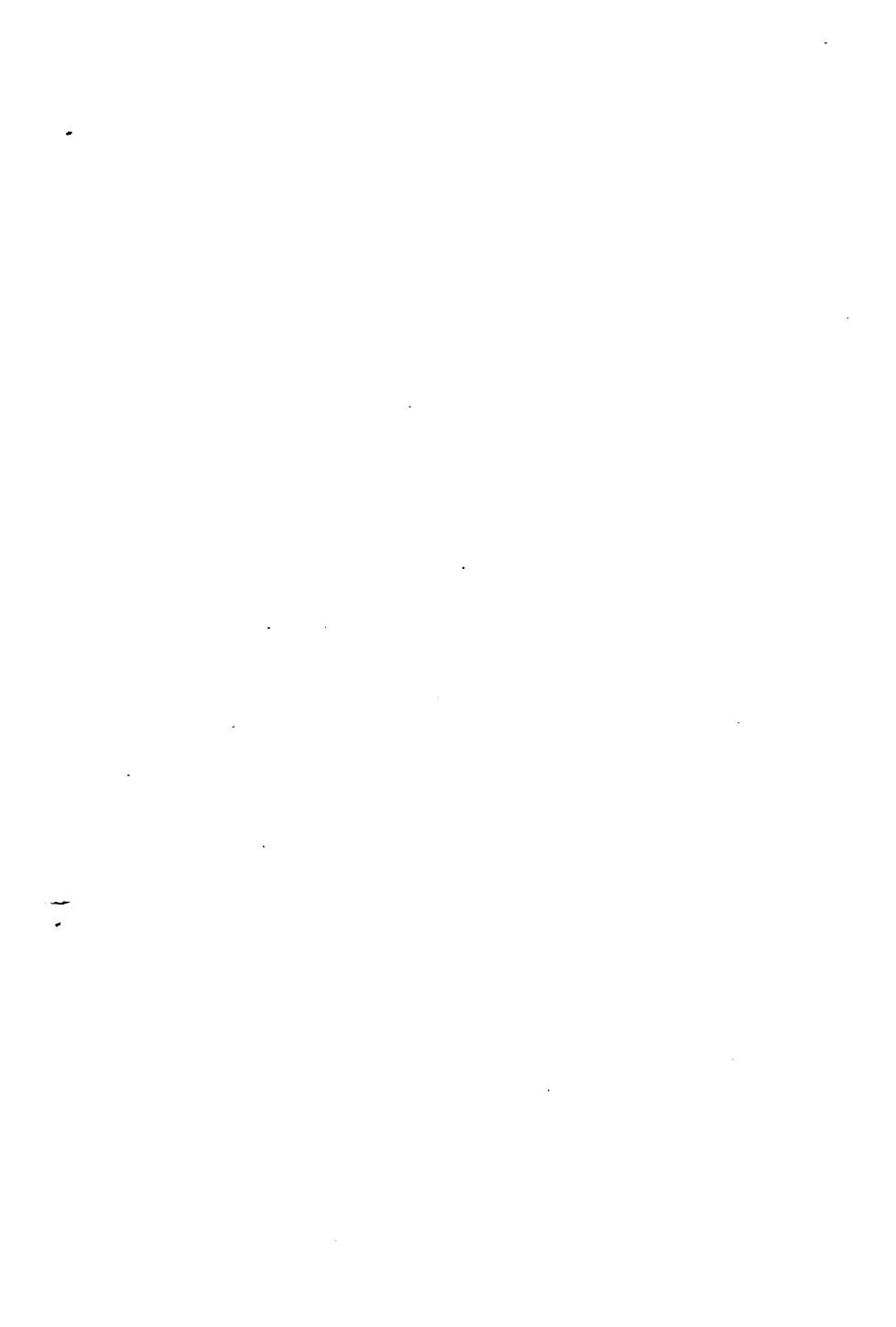
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# CAMILLE'S TORMENTOR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"WE ARE WORLDLINGS," "ROSA NOEL,"

&c., &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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## CAMILLE'S TORMENTOR.



### CHAPTER I.

"It bodeth most bad when two fire-balls (husband's and wife's anger) come both together."

"**D**ISAPPOINTED in you? No! that expresses nothing of what I feel. I am shocked, humiliated, distressed beyond bounds!"

These words were said in a clear, youthful woman's voice that sounded with silvery distinctness above the roll of wheels on Paris asphalte, above the harsh, monotonous cries and noises of the street.

"And you are what I hoped never to see, my Amy—absurdly, unreasonably jealous and exacting," cut in a man's voice, in tones hardly more temperate or self-controlled than the former speaker's. "A jealous woman—bah! and that woman *you*!" a shudder.

"And if I am jealous?" The voice was now angrier, more vibrating, but yet neither high nor shrill. "Have I not cause to be? The more I think of it, the more I feel myself justified in speaking to you as I am speaking. You've neglected me—outraged me ——"

"Go on, what next, Amy?" the man's voice had taken an inflection of dangerous half-scornful calm. "Neglected you, and outraged you; you, my wife of six months. And how? If you will be good enough to enlighten me?"

"I hate the theatre. I detest your

scribbling. I loathe the people you are thrown among !”

“ That is no answer. Be a little more closely personal, please. I’ll stand steady, I think, under anything now.”

“ I’ve no doubt you will. Strange, the Aubérons should have taken me to the theatre, and that I should have seen you there, as I did—you, who had refused to take me! what a treat it was for me; the whole thing! I wonder why I did not faint, or scream aloud.”

“ Thank Heaven! you did not,” murmured he with a faint laugh—a fatal laugh. There was a slight pause, as of gathering waters before their on-rush—then :

“ I wish I had listened to mamma—yielded to her. Do you hear me? yielded to her, Camille. How well I remember her saying: ‘ A half Frenchman, and a

man who lives by his wits !"—she's clear-sighted, she knew you would ill-treat me."

"Have I ill-treated you?" he interrupted in a low, furious voice, the blood suffusing his fair face, his hands involuntarily clenching themselves. "I know, Amy, that you have amply fulfilled your promise of being 'quick tempered;' how many times since our marriage have I found it impossible to help quarrelling with you?"

"You turn it back on me ! manly !"

"True, at all events," answered he quickly. "Impossible to help quarrelling with you, just as it is at this moment. I've tried saying soothing things to you till I am tired; they've been like oil on flame. Now, Amy, one word; whatever you are going to say to me, let it be from yourself, and I shan't wax res-

tive; but don't quote *my mother-in-law*!"

"Not quote mamma? My own dear mother?"

"No; not those speeches that are insults to the man who is, or ought to be, your own dear husband."

"Ought to be, perhaps, but is not," answered Amy with unabated heat and vehemence. "You leave me alone hour after hour; you forsake me for actresses."

"Amy!"

"Remember last night! In her box! looking into her eyes! caressing, yes, caressing—"

"What!"

"Her flowers, her bouquet. I am sure I saw you kiss it."

"Oh! that is all. Perhaps I did."

"All! all?" a stamp of the foot, a passionate burst of tears. "I will not bear

this ! it is contempt and ill-usage that no woman ought to bear. Mamma was right. I wish—I wish—that I had never seen you !”

“ Do you mean that, Amy ?” Each word sharply severed from the other by a gap of hurried breathing.

“ Yes, I do mean it. Only since my marriage have I known what capacities I had for suffering.”

“ Do you reflect how much of it you have brought on yourself ? But I forget ; you are too much a creature of impulse, of passion, of nerves, to think.”

“ A mere puppet in fact !” cried Amy beside herself with anger. “ A doll, quite unsuited to live with a thinking creature with no nerves, no impulses, no passions (except for actresses) like you. Yes, you’re right, we are unfitted for each other—”

“ Did I ever say we were ? ”

“ And had better separate,” she continued, not heeding him, and in the same maddened tone. “ We shall be happier apart.”

“ You are not in earnest,” he said, crossing the room and taking her cold trembling hands in his own.

She wrenched them away. “ I am in earnest,” she cried, “ I have been miserable since I married you ; and you might have made me so happy.”

“ Yes,” he exclaimed, “ by giving up every instant of my time, all my work whereby I win my daily bread, all my old interests, old companions—”

“ Say no more.” They interrupted each other, of course, as angry people always do. “ Say no more ; I understand. I have made you as miserable as you have made me ! we will part. I will go back

to my old life in which I was happy, and you can remain undisturbed in yours."

There came a breathless pause. The fire leaped up, and displayed the gay French furniture and ornaments of the room that Camille Langdon had arranged with such proud pleasure for his nobly-born English wife, only six months ago. The capricious blaze played on the English wife's slight erect figure, haughty little head, and dead-pale, delicate face; played on the man's grey-white face, set lips, fiery blue eyes, and shining, close cut black hair.

"You've really had enough of me?" said he slowly and huskily. "I might have known how it would be! You want to get back in freedom to your old life again? Very well."

"You agree then?" There was a sort of angry amazement in her voice; and a



look half of astonishment, half of mortification in her face. Her tears fell no longer. "You agree—and without a struggle? It had better be final then. Yes," pressing her hands to her head, "let me be Amy Bellamy again! Let the separation be final and complete."

As she finished her sentence, her anger seemed to be replaced by a firmness befitting an abiding determination. It stung him to the heart.

Those last words, uttered in the trembling voice of anger, or jealousy, would have had a very different weight from the leaden one her calmness laid on them. As it was, he felt maddened by the loveless resolution of her tone and manner.

"Do you fully comprehend what you are saying?" asked he in a low monotonous voice. "Do you realize that to be Amy Bellamy again you would have to

be divorced from me? Be my wife no longer?"

"Being your wife has laid me on the rack."

"Yes, the rack of your own unreasonableness—violence—jealousy—"

"Do you know," she cut in, "that I'd rather have a blow from your hand than those words from your lips? '*Unreasonable*'—'*violent*'—'*jealous*.' A virago, a termagant, in other words!"

"Yes, '*other words*' that I have not used!"

So they quoted each other as very angry people usually do; inflaming each other at every new utterance.

"Far, far better, since we are each so cruelly undeceived, to separate. For you to forget you ever had a wife; for me to forget I ever had a husband."

Here she paused, and they looked

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steadily at each other with hard, anger-darkened eyes.

“And what can you make of your ‘case?’” demanded he, with a discordant laugh. “Unfortunately for your ‘cause of freedom,’ I’ve neither struck you nor deserted you.”

She went quickly up to him, proffering her cheek.

“Strike me!” said she breathlessly, and between her teeth.

He neither answered, nor made any motion.

She lifted his right hand with a movement so swift and sudden, that he had not time to resist, and with all her force struck her own cheek with it. A heavy ring on his little finger cut the delicate skin and made a tiny wound.

“Good!” cried she, “it bleeds!” Then she flew to the door and opened it wide.

"Go!" she cried, "desert me! then I shall be free!"

"You *have* an infernal temper!" he breathed forth. "I didn't know though that it would come to this. Very well! we'll part; but first—"

He strode over to where she stood; caught her in his arms, despite her struggles, kissed her repeatedly, and with passionate violence strained her to him. Then he flung her from him, she staggered backwards and fell, but not on anything more dangerous than a yielding pile of cushions on a low couch.

"Be free if you choose," he said, "but why not submit, Amy?" and he laughed as he spoke; so making her clench her hands with renewed anger.

Then he crossed the threshold of the open door, and she was alone.

She turned her face over amongst the

cushions, and lay like a log; tearless, with a reactionary apathy on her that made noises sound far away, made thought sluggish, and feeling numb.

Gradually, as time slipped on, she began to frame questions and answers within her mind.

Time to dress for dinner? and no Camille either to dress for, or dine with. What? She must dine alone? Well, what did it matter for one night. She started up, and pushed away the disordered hair from her hot temples.

Beyond a doubt she had the most violent temper that any women could have; and was as jealous, exacting, spoilt and unreasonable as any woman could be; but she had a heart—a warm and loving one, and she had great capacities for suffering.

She sat up and suffered. Her young heart ached within her, but even to herself

she would not allow that she had been in the wrong (she never could be made to admit that she had been in the wrong).

She prepared to leave the room, and in going from the couch to the door had to pass by a large coloured photograph of her husband; before it she paused as if under compulsion; looked steadily at it; and as she gazed, all its wonted *diablerie* came back to her tear-stained face. She tossed her head with an insufferable motion of pride and temper, and turned the face of the portrait against the wall for the original of the portrait to see on his return!

Then she tripped on in her high-heeled shoes. She made as careful a toilette for her solitary repast as if she had been dressing for—well, for Camille!

They were so ill off that she could not have a maid, and her unaccustomed fingers

adorned her but slowly. However, the effect was as satisfactory when all was finished as if she had had a dozen tiring women. Usually she affected bright colours, but to-night she put on a black dress; Camille liked her in black; and out of this perfectly made and arranged gown her dazzlingly white throat and pearly-hued little face rose with a bewitching union of grace, delicacy and spirited individuality. Her large hazel eyes had lost their red and weepy look, her skin had regained its natural lily-of-the-valley fairness, her rippling golden brown hair was no longer dishevelled; she had an air of expectancy which rendered her expression vivacious. What did she expect? A footstep perhaps; a clear tenor voice singing "Lune de Miel."

She returned to the salon. The dinner arrived from the Café round the corner.

“ Monsieur ? ”

“ Oh, certainly ! a plate for Monsieur, though he might not dine at home.”

Strange, what an unappetising thing eating alone was. Lady Amy had often eaten with more zest quarelling all the time (in English, for the non-benefit of the French servant) than she did to-night sitting there in the enforced serenity of solitariness.

She fell to wondering how many times she had quarrelled with Camille since her marriage. Well ! she had always been a proverb for her temper, and he knew it. What could he expect ?

“ Not,” thought Lady Amy to herself, “ that I consider myself by any means *bad* tempered : a little quick and fiery, no doubt, but then one must have a temper of some sort. Now what will Camille do with himself this evening ?



Go to the theatre of course. I am half determined to go myself; and if he is in that woman's box—— I'll be Amy Bellamy again!"

She sent away the unjustly treated dinner; first sending the servant out to get her a *loge* at the *Diversités*, where a certain M. Dénarié, a "detestable, cynical" friend of Camille's had a play on. Then she ordered a *coupé* from the *remise* in the next street, put on a black jacket embroidered with silver and gold, tied a pointed scrap of black lace over her head, and with her heart beating in trepidation, set out alone for the theatre. Very fast and unprotected she felt; yet she would not attempt to get any one to go with her, not wishing to have a witness of her possible mortification and rage.

Holding her little head stiffly erect, and

looking straight before her, although conscious that she would have liked to hang the one, and not raise the other above the hem of her dress, she found her way to her box.

When she summoned resolution to look about her, the first people she saw, were (such is life!) the very last she wanted to see. The Mountjoys—Mr. Mrs. and Miss Mountjoy; also, a fair-haired girl in mourning whom Lady Amy had never seen before.

Between Miss Mountjoy and Lady Amy raged—or rather smouldered, and had smouldered for long—a silent feud. Rivalry and an invincible determination on the part of each to outshine the other were the *casa belli*. Circumstances had sometimes forced them to interfere with each other, but oftener they had forced circumstances to impair each other's pleasure.

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To do Lady Amy justice, the warfare had lately been only on Miss Mountjoy's side; for after Amy met and learnt to care for Camille Langdon, she ceased trying to shine down her friend. For they were friends in seeming; intimate friends.

"Oh, mamma, look! Amy! all alone!" said Miss Mountjoy *staccato* to her mother.

"Who?" asked the young girl in black timidly.

"I said Amy," answered Miss Mountjoy carelessly. "You don't know of course whom I mean by Amy. Lady Amy Bellamy—oh, I beg her pardon—Langdon."

"That pretty English-looking girl in a black and gold jacket, in the box over there all alone?"

"Yes, looking ready to bite, as usual."

"I think she looks ready to cry, more than ready to bite," murmured the girl,

"poor pretty little thing ; all alone. Has she a husband ?"

"Supposed to have. She married one six months ago," returned Miss Mountjoy drily, curtly, and as if it was not of the slightest consequence how she answered her questioner.

"And did she marry him *for love*" (with soft scorn) "or"——

"No, yes, I don't know—Mamma, the opera-glass ; I'll *lorgner* her."

She looked at her friend through the glass, and Amy winced under the scrutiny, wondering if there were traces of tears or of suffering about her. She wished then that she had had some one to turn and speak to, and smile at ; but she had to sit there alone, trying to do that most difficult thing, give the right expression to a face in complete repose.

The little *lever de rideau* was concluded ;

the curtain fell; people began talking to each other. Lady Amy who had no one to talk to, leaned back and fanned herself; although her pale face hardly looked in need of the refreshment of cool air.

"Gertrude," said the girl in black to Miss Mountjoy, "if it would not bore you, would you mind telling me about that pretty Lady Amy? I should like to hear her story; I am sure it must be an interesting one." The girl spoke in a halting, hesitating fashion, as if weighing each word in the fear of giving offence.

As it happened, Miss Mountjoy was quite in the mood for making Lady Amy her theme.

"She is Lady Rosehew's only daughter—prim, proud, poor Lady Rosehew, you know; but I forget, you know nobody. Why Lord Rosehew married this

poor plain little woman, nobody could understand—could they, mamma? I've often heard you say so. Well! he did marry her; and unfortunately Amy was only a daughter; there were no other children. When the Earl died, the title went to a cousin. There was not much money either to go or stay. Lady Rosehew was left with next to nothing. However she managed her life in a manner mysteriously beautiful. They got on capitally; living in Wrode three parts of the year, and spending the other part either in London, or here. Of course she thought that Amy, who was rather good-looking, would make a fine match; not at all! Amy set her heart and mind on this Mr. Langdon, whose mother was French, and who is more French than English himself. She met him here in Paris. He is a man who writes for his living; and not books;

scrappy kinds of things for newspapers—criticisms of plays and pictures—that sort of thing, you know. Poor little Lady Rosehew's hair almost turned grey with disappointment and mortification; but Amy's will is as the will of ten, and her temper to match—Good Heavens! what a temper! A temper you know—no, you don't; but never mind—that goes off into tantrums—screams hysterics—oh, fearful! Unreasonable? the semblance of a contradiction made her frantic. Vain? She fancied she could wear anything. Wilful? her mother has never been able to control her. Jealous? While she was engaged to Mr. Langdon she was in torment if he spoke to any one else.”

“Poor little creature! how afflicted,” said the other in a low tone. “And Mr. Langdon—what sort of man is he.”

“He is a—— *there* he is! There is Mr.

Langdon! and not with Amy! in that box with those fast looking people over there. Oh, mamma, how dreadful for Amy!" she spoke in a tone of the keenest relish.

"The one who is laughing now, showing very white teeth?" asked the girl in black.

"Yes, next the woman with daffodils in her hair, and on her dress."

The girl in black looked at the man next the woman with the daffodils, and his face left no hazy or indistinct impression on her mind. He did not look at her, but if he had he would only have seen a simple girlish face set in silky fair hair, and with indescribable graces of expression, and soft curves of lip, chin, eyebrow, throat; a face gentle, and pure, and good, yet with a certain stamp of firmness and character upon it. A face not



striking, but with a permanent charm, when once realized. The girl looked as if she had had, and still were having, denials of fortune, niggardly supplies to the love of pleasure natural at her age, and as if her nature, rather than expanding, were being cramped and repressed. Her name was Georgina Glyn.

"Poor Amy!" said Miss Mountjoy, jubilantly.

"And that is her husband?" said Georgie Glyn.

"Yes," laughing, "he is the happy possessor of a wife with a title, a temper, a tongue——"

"Listen to Gertrude!" whispered Mrs. Mountjoy proudly to her husband.

"And a very pretty face," Georgie ventured to add.

"A matter of taste," returned the other, shrugging her shoulders. "I've known

people who did not think that she had the slightest pretensions to good looks."

"They must have been very eccentric people then, I think," said Miss Glyn, and then looked as if she feared a snub. She longed to ask another question, but hesitated, counted ten, found she could not refrain, and enquired.

"Mr. Langdon—has he a good temper, or a bad one?"

"Anything but a good one I should judge," said Miss Mountjoy, "I have no doubt they have already begun to lead a cat and dog life. He, a sort of Bohemian, without the slightest caste prejudice, would be made furious by fine lady airs such as Amy could assume on occasions; although at other times she was anything but slow! How is she feeling at this moment I wonder, seated in her box alone, while there, opposite her, is her good-look-

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ing husband with those queer looking people."

She glanced over at the young wife as she spoke; Georgie did the same. Lady Amy's white set face betrayed nothing of the inward rage and despair that were making havoc of wedded love, youthful pleasure, mental peace.

In a fit of anger she had gone to the theatre; why did she not reflect that her husband might have done the same? If he had angered and wounded her, so had she him.

How the light beat down on the odious woman with the daffodils! On Camille's handsome face and shining black hair; on the buxom, high-coloured good looks of her friend Gertrude; on the fair little head of that unknown girl beside her; and so it was beating down on her, Amy—alone, forsaken, mortified, maddened.

She felt that she had reached the last point of endurance, that she must go.

She rose.

"Amy seems to be going," said Miss Mountjoy watching her. "Papa, it would only be kind of you to go and ask her if she will not come in here with us and see the play out—or at least you might offer to find her carriage or something. That husband of her's does not seem to even notice she is going."

Mr. Mountjoy who was a florid, fat, *biddable* gentleman, living very much "under the shadow of his wife's umbrella," rose up at his daughter's behest and left the box; returning shortly, but alone. Lady Amy had allowed him to see her into her carriage.

"Something wrong there," said Mr. Mountjoy with an air of seeing through a

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millstone. "Husband a bear—a ruffian—to serve her in this way."

He was mistaken, Camille was neither; but he was a bad tempered man in a rage.

Not a hot violent rage, for that was not his calibre; he was sullen, smouldering; apt to cherish anger, slow to forget an injury; yet, withal, his was a character to be admired, for he had wonderful self-sway, usually, high principle, and a keen sense of what was true and honourable.

A strange pang shot through him as he looked up, and saw that his wife was gone. But he did not move; only bit his lip, remembered the galling scene of the afternoon and stood still.

His wife had been supposed to have done an ill-advised, self-immolating thing in marrying him (what more galling thought to a proud man?)

Now, the conviction seemed to have come home to her own mind that she had made a fatal mistake in becoming his wife. What more heart-touching stab could be given a husband?

Should he allow her the chance of being Amy Bellamy again if she chose to embrace it?

Here a surging sound came into his ears. What? Amy lost to him for ever? Free to marry again? His no longer?

Well, better so perhaps than to live with him, beating the music out of both their lives with her discontent, jealousy, and uncontrolled temper.

Let her go back to her prim, proud mother. He and she were unsuited to each other, perhaps; a Lady Amy should not be mated with a poor, unsettled scribbler with a doubtful future.

How black and desolate that future

looked without her—troubled and uncomfortable enough with her, thanks to her jealousies and rages, and his own unaccommodating temper—but black and desolate without her!

Yet he vowed to himself that he would not go home that night; and he did not; spending the midnight hours and the small hours at a gay supper at the Café —.

But as morning broke, there came to him a violent revulsion of feeling. Shivering, he stepped out into the street in the grey March dawning, and walked along the thoroughfare deserted but for a stray gendarme, a student or two, an occasional flower-girl up betimes and on her way to dispose of her fragrant wares. Her Lent lilies and violets, jonquils, hyacinths and snowdrops.

As he reached his own *porte-cochère* he

found to his surprise that it was already open ; no need to ring up the just awakened *concierge*.

When he entered the pretty flaunting little salon, the clock on the mantel-piece was striking six.

Somehow the room looked bare, meagrely adorned.

"I am jaundiced," said he to himself, and passed on to the door leading to his and Amy's room, through which he was obliged to pass to get to his dressing-room.

At the door, he paused, overwhelmed with half painful, half delicious emotion. All the tide of his being seemed to set towards the sleeper whose soft breathing he could almost now fancy he heard.

She might wake to upbraid him, wake to rage and storm at him ; perhaps renew her cruel asseverations of yesterday,—but



here he was back again; here stretched before him and her a new day, an untried future which might well be a happy one, if each would but exercise consideration, forbearance and self-control.

He turned the handle of the door. Tears had not been so near his eyes since he was a boy.

He wished that he had bought a bunch of violets, all fresh and dewy, to lay on her pillow against her rippling hair. How it rippled; and how soft it was! So was her heart soft, he verily believed; soft and warm, though her temper was so sharp and violent.

He entered very quietly—to start back with a gasping exclamation.

The early morning light, stealing in rosy and warm, revealed that there was no Amy in the room. No vestige of her, for even her fascinating adjuncts were gone.

Gone the untidy heap of little boots and shoes on the box under the window—the box itself gone; the scent-bottles and brushes, and gay-coloured powder-boxes, and the once sugar-plum boxes which she now filled with her gloves and ribbons, the ridiculous little inkstand that she never wrote out of—everything gone!

He understood perfectly. Her impatient spirit never able to brook delay or waiting, had hurried her off before she had time to go through the process which with her served for thinking. Little butterfly-brained Amy! One reason he loved her as he did, was because of those very volatile unreasoning shallow wits of hers.

He had brains enough himself for two, and would have found a clever wife irksome. He sank down in a chair, and sat there motionless, hiding his face in his hands. For an hour he staid there, stirless as a lump of wood or stone.

He heard the servant come bustling into the salon; heard the sound of her broom, the rattle of her dustpan. The homely noises drove him back into the comedy of life; the tragic complexion of his thoughts altered.

He rose, and going into his dressing-room changed his evening for a morning suit; then he issued forth into the salon.

"At what time did her ladyship go?" asked he calmly of the servant Marie, "do you know?"

"Oh, but yes," Marie knew. "She had helped miladi to pack. Miladi had left the house at half-past five in order to catch the *grande vitesse* at six for Calais."

"Ah!"

"*Toute seule!*" added Marie, lifting her eyebrows, dropping her eyes and the corners of her mouth dolorously, shaking

her head slowly from side to side, and breathing out the words in a prodigious sigh.

Camille made no rejoinder; but after swallowing a cup of coffee went from force of habit into a small inner room which he had made his den; shut himself in; mechanically placed paper before him; drew the inkstand forward, and became absorbed—tranced in the thought of Amy.

When the matrimonial atmosphere was clear, Amy had been wont to bring in work that *did not rustle* (this was expressly stipulated by him) and while his busy fingers travelled over the paper, hers flew over the canvas, or ticking, or lace.

Sometimes he had chanced to look up, and had found that the work had dropped on her knees, while her clear, spirited brown eyes were fixed on his face. Then their looks would meet for an instant, and

she would smile her characteristic smile, half sweet, half mockingly, and quickly resume her needle again.

He knew now, through all his anger and mortification, how well he loved her, with the stability of the English half of his nature, and the hot vehemence which he had inherited from his French mother.

He was in torment as he sat there trying to drag his thoughts away from the wife who was so dainty, headstrong, pretty, passionate, troublesome, sometimes disdainful, often violent, always bewitching.

With a strenuous effort he abstracted his imagination from dwelling on her, and fixed it upon the work he had in hand, weary though he was from loss of sleep, exhausted by emotion, and all unfit for mental toil.

"I'll go after her—by Heaven I will!" exclaimed he aloud, in a few minutes,

starting up, and throwing down his pen. "I will give up everything to get her back—my work, my trusty old friends, my life that has been as comfortable as an old shoe. I will give up Paris, and resign myself to London, if she likes—I'll do more—I'll live in an English country town so dull that it causes a new kind of yawn, if she bids me!" He caught his head in his hands.

"I feel as if somebody were drawing my brains with a cork-screw," he muttered, scowling with pain. "Shall I follow her? Yes, I will, if it is only to make the rupture more serious. Now for a Bradshaw; Bradshaw, and such a headache as mine!"

He found a Bradshaw sitting on crumpled leaves in an unexpected part of the room. He could not help smiling; Amy, of course, had taken it from its usual place,

got into hopeless confusion amongst the figures, and flung it down in a rage anywhere.

He searched for and found a suitable train; then threw himself anew into his work with the ardour of urgency and necessity. It must be sent off by a certain time, and head or no head, was to be finished.

He must forget the plot of his own life, and appropriate to his imagination only the complications of those fictitious personages of whom he wrote; and this after an absolutely entire night robbed of sleep, after the exhaustion of excitement, the concentration-stealing, and profound emotion lately experienced.

It was no wonder that a surging, singing sound came into his ears; that a black bar descended between his eyes and the light, when after three hours of forced, unbroken

labour, he rose up and prepared to leave the room.

Objects whirled in a giddy dance around him, as he gave a farewell glance at their familiar looks. His inkstand—endeared to him by its share in his life; his boxes, books, papers; the gorgeous but hardly common-sensical *white satin* pen-wiper made by Lady Amy and presented to him as a fitting gift. He felt that he could not leave Paris without seeing his friend Denarié and bidding him good-bye. They had been intimate friends for years; it would have seemed monstrous to both to part without a shake of the hand—an adieu.

Before leaving the house he summoned Marie, and bade her put some things into a portemanteau for him; he was going to England.

Saying that he was going to England



was a satisfaction to him ; although it only established a seeming reunion between himself and his wife in the eyes of a servant.

Denarié lived a mile away from Camille, in a narrow murky street, *au cinquième*.

It had been fondly hoped by himself and his admirers, that the play now going on at the Diversités would bring him down from the fifth floor and deposit him in the first. This happy consummation had not yet arrived, and Camille, shivering, burning, aching, yet trying all the time to make himself believe that he felt as usual, mounted the steep flights that led to his friend's abiding place.

He knocked ; and an unfamiliar voice bade him "come in." Entering, he found a young man whom he had never before seen in sole possession ; a tall, slender young fellow, with a face sombre and yet

sweet, with an expression searching yet gentle, with large grey eyes at once burning and tender.

"Denarié is not here?" inquired Camille of the stranger.

"Denarié is gone to Asnières"——

"And will return—do you know when?"

"To-night."

"What a confounded bore! My name is Langdon."

"And mine Blgrave," rejoined the other.

"I will write a few lines and leave them for Denarié, or—my hand shakes to such an extent—shall you see him on his return?"

"Yes."

"Then would you be kind enough to tell him that I am sorry, more than sorry not to have seen him, as I leave for England this afternoon; my return doubtful; only that."

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"I will tell him. You wished to bid him good-bye?"

"Yes."

"I will tell him."

Camille having given his thanks, the two bade each other good-morning, and Camille retook his way down the stairs; pausing for a moment on reaching the street to steady his whirling head and rest his aching limbs. "Rheumatic," he explained to himself.

He decided that there was no one else in Paris of whom he wished to take leave, and went on his homeward way, trying to convince himself that fresh air and exercise were all that were needed to vitalize his sluggish brain, refresh his strangely jaded consciousness, and allay the fever that dried and blackened his lips. The noises of the streets only added to the confusion of his brain; he found it im-

possible to distinguish between the veritable sounds that struck his tympanum from without, and those dull, surging, singing sounds that rose up to his ears as the tide of circulation coursed morbidly to and from his brain.

Suddenly there came upon him a horrid sense of pain and bewilderment, so unnatural, that he knew not but what he might be struck with death. He paused, faltered, fell; and knew no more of self, or sound, or light.





## CHAPTER II.

"I loved a love once—fairest among women—  
But now her doors are closed on me, I must not see her."

**L**ADY ROSEHEW sat in the morning-room of her little town house. Usually it was let to augment her unsuitably small income; but just now she was allowing herself the luxury of being her own tenant.

It was a raw March afternoon, her chair was drawn up cosily before a blazing fire; a little table at her elbow had on it her cup of tea and bit of toast.

Amy's Blenheim spaniel, having eaten cake to repletion, was lying asleep on the rug. Lady Rosehew's prim, slim feet (for even her feet were prim) rested close together, and in a quite straight line on a large footstool; her dark, neat glossy head, capless and youthful, was bent a little over the fascinating story which she was reading. On her small, swart features rested a bland and absolute repose.

The noises of the crowded Mayfair street came to her faintly through double windows and heavy curtains; a glass screen gave her the fire's light without its heat. Flowers (Lady Rosehew and her daughter were the kind of people to whom flowers are sent) perfumed the air delicately. Countless small refinements lent to the room an air of æsthetic grace unpurchasable by money, unless taste and judgment directs its outlay.

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Lady Rosehew sat there an image of confirmed tranquillity. She was in fact resting after the heat and burthen of that day which appertains to all mothers who wish to see daughters or a daughter suitably provided for.

Lady Amy was not suitably provided for in her estimation—far from it—her daughter's marriage had been a bitter disappointment to Lady Rosehew, who had other widely different views for her only child; but she was settled in life, all tension and uncertainty regarding her were at an end, her path in life was fixed.

In April, Lady Rosehew meditated going over to Paris for a little pleasant change. Fortunately she thought Camille one of the most agreeable of men, although as a son-in-law she had had a decided opinion on the subject of his agreeability not outweighing his undesirability.

She laid down her book for an instant, and took up her tea and buttered toast. What an impetuous knock on the hall-door thrilled through the house! In another moment the door of the room where she sat was flung violently open; her daughter Amy entered tempestuously, sank down in a heap on the footstool at her feet, and without a word burst into an uncontrolled fit of tears—one of Amy's old stormy fits of crying, half of rage, half grief. Her little dog waking, jumped on her with liveliest recognition and joy; she pushed him roughly away; then drew him back to her, and bestowed tears and kisses in equal proportion on his silky yellow and white head.

“Amy!” said Lady Rosehew in consternation, “what has happened? Why are you here? Where is your husband?”

Lady Amy raised her head, crying.



"I have left him—I am half mad—he has made me wretched—I have come from Paris all alone—I have lost my boxes! I came *all alone*! Is it not a marvel that I got here safely?"

"Why did you come?" asked Lady Rosehew in great distress. "Only six months married, and you tell me *you have left your husband*!"

"Yes, I have left him for ever!" said Lady Amy distractedly, "I never wish to see his face again—I intend to be divorced from him"——

Lady Rosehew gave a great start; her brown skin paled; the word had odium of the worst sort attached to it in her estimation. Divorced—a divorced daughter! Oh, for a daughter who could *sometimes* take half-way measures!

"Amy!" she cried, "that I could not bear! To have you a divorced woman—

no, that I could not bear!" Her head sank on her hands.

"You will have to bear it, mother, for I must be free!"

"Free," murmured Lady Rosehew, "what *freedom*!"

"He was driving me mad," cried her daughter, "breaking my heart! He neglected me, quarrelled with me violently, incessantly, and last night treated me brutally; let me think, was it really only last night? It seems a year ago." Then she poured forth her list of trivial wrongs, ending with a childishly violent "I hate him!"

Lady Rosehew raised her head and fixed her small, piercing dark eyes on her daughter's passion-inflamed face.

"I know you, Amy," she said quietly, "my poor passionate, unreasonable child! Must I see your bright young life wrecked?"

live to see you under a cloud, under a ban? see you bear the slighting coldness that people show to a woman who has left her husband? I cannot bear it! Go back to your husband, Amy, or write to him and make him join you here. Submit to anything rather than that shameful ordeal of law—newspapers——”

“I will not!” struck in Amy, “I’ll die, before I’ll go to him!”

“To hear you say that you will *die* gives me no pain compared to what that—other word—did.”

“Do you mean to say,” said Lady Amy, turning on the footstool so that she exactly confronted her mother, and speaking in the slow tone of extremest anger; her mother knew by experience that she had reached the climax of anger by that still tone. “Do you mean to say that you would rather see me dead than divorced?”

"Yes—rather see you dead, Amy."

Lady Amy started to her feet; and stood leaning one hand on the small table at her mother's side. It trembled under the pressure.

"Nothing you can say—even *that* shall turn me," she rejoined.

"No, Amy, I suppose not!" said her mother in a tone of painful conviction. "I know of old that opposition only strengthens you in your determinations. But this once yield! Amy, go back to your husband; do not make me bear the shame and misery of having my only daughter under a ban!"

"You did not want me to marry him," retorted Lady Amy, "you almost went down on your knees and begged me not to marry him—yet now you wish to drive me back to him."

"Unreasonable, always. No, I did not

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want you to marry him—it would have been better if you had yielded to me. Can you see that now?”

“No!” cried Lady Amy, hiding her face in her hands and sobbing afresh.

Hope began to dawn on Lady Rosehew's spirit.

“Having married him,” she continued in less distressed accents, “I hope with all my heart and soul that you will go back to him—live peaceably with him, and not draw on yourself the contempt and ill-usage of the world.”

“I'll never go back to him!” cried her daughter, with a flaming glance through her tears.

“Then I shall write to him, and tell him to come here to you.”

“If you do—if you do!” said Lady Amy menacingly, “well! if you do—he will not find me here.”

Lady Rosehew's thin lips hardened into two straight lines.

"I shall write to him to-morrow," answered she deliberately.

Down came the torrent of her daughter's wrath. Lady Rosehew, accustomed to her violence, and knowing that it was useless to attempt to stem it, sat quiescent; receiving the hard words, wild gestures, fierce looks with impervious calm; returning no answers, yet giving no impression either of weakness nor meekness. At length Lady Amy, utterly spent, flung herself on a sofa with her face turned to the wall.

Her little spaniel, delighted, jumped up and crouched down in the hollow of her back. She drew him over, and clasping him in her arms, fell forthwith into the heavy sleep of exhaustion.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE UNLUCKY LETTER.

**L**ADY ROSEHEW sat writing in the same room where we found her yesterday afternoon.

It was mid-day. A night had come and gone. Lady Amy's boxes had been discovered to be safe at the station; she herself was still in bed, waiting for their arrival before rising.

Lady Rosehew was penning a curt cold letter to Camille Langdon, which

she strangely enough concluded would bring him to London without delay.

As she signed her name, a thumping and banging in the hall told her that the boxes had arrived. Amy would soon be clothed—but not in her right mind, Lady Rosehew feared, judging from the state of that mind half an hour ago. Passionately unforgiving of her husband, angrily, not calmly, determined to be separated from him; threateningly violent on the subject of her mother's writing to him.

“Remember, mamma, if you persist in writing to him—I leave you,” were her last words as her mother quitted the room.

Its often-assumed expression of invincible, calm determination settled on Lady Rosehew's small dark face.

She made no reply to her daughter, but going straight to her davenport began,



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ended, and dispatched the aforementioned letter to Camille.

She was still sitting pen in hand, answering notes and invitations, when Amy came into the the room with her usual impetuous step. Alas ! that very impetuous step had caused poor Amy many minor accidents !

She advanced to the middle of the room. "You have not—" she began, then stopped short ; continuing in a moment, "after what I said, you surely would not——"

" ' Surely would not—' what ?"

"Write to him !"

"I have written."

"But you have not sent the letter ?"

"Yes, I have, and my conscience approves."

Lady Amy put her hand up to her throat ; she probably felt as if she had a string tied around it.

"Very well, mamma! I suppose he will come directly he receives that letter! But, as I said before, he shall not find me here—I'm going——"

"Where?" demanded Lady Rosehew with apparent stoicism, though in reality her heart was agitated within her.

Lady Amy made no secret of her destination.

"I am going to Wrode," she said.

It was like a wilful child saying, "If you do that, I'll hide in the cupboard and you'll never find me!"

"I shall wait here for your husband," returned Lady Rosehew steadily, "then I shall follow you to Wrode, taking him with me. You do not intend going to-day I suppose?" She glanced at the window as she spoke. Wet snow was beating against the panes. It was a wild, filthy, miserable day. The snow, so

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white in mid air, became a dark abomination as it lay on the London streets.

“ Yes, I do mean to go to-day.”

Lady Rosehew, remembering that opposition only confirmed her daughter in her own resolves, then said, “ You do not care to take Burrard with you, I suppose? You do not mind travelling alone?”

“ Yes, I do very much mind travelling alone! Please spare me Burrard.”

“ Oh, very well,” assented Lady Rosehew, “ take her then.”

Lady Amy rang the bell in hot haste, and gave her directions.

“ Have you any plans, Amy, for what you will do after getting to Wrode?”

“ Certainly I have. But do not ask me what they are, for I shall not tell you.”

“ I have no idea of asking you,” replied Lady Rosehew calmly, and felt that she knew with tolerable accuracy what her

daughter would do, and where she would go. For a man and his wife, who for a long time had been in their service, were now keeping a lodging in the best part of Wrode. She could not forbear a slight laugh. "My dear child," said she, "why do you give yourself the trouble of going down there, and us the trouble of following you? Why not stay quietly here?"

"I will not. I wish him to know that I fled at his approach," said Lady Amy tragically. "I wish you to tell him so."

"I shall do nothing of the sort. I must give him some explanation; but it shall be my own."

"You will tell him, I suppose, something that will lower me in his eyes and my own. You will make it appear that I am longing, pining to have him again—well! he will be undeceived when you

have hunted me down, and forced me to meet him face to face!"

"You are sure that he will come?" said Lady Rosehew calmly.

Lady Amy stood for an instant petrified ; the blood that had been crimsoning her cheeks ebbing slowly away. Then without a word, she turned and swept out of the room.

In the thickest of the storm Lady Amy Langdon departed for Wrode, without bidding her mother good-bye.

Lady Rosehew watched her daughter's exodus from an upper window.





## CHAPTER IV.

WRODE.



LONG, stark pier in a profuse snow-storm and a high wind; no one to meet you, nor expect you. There are few things less cheerful to a dainty sensitive woman, than an arrival such as this of Lady Amy's.

"Is the luggage to be sent anywhere, my lady?" asked Burrard, coming up beside her mistress with a woe begone, rueful air, "or is it to be left at the 'ead

of the pier till sent for?" Burrard was a tall, pale, quite lady-like looking cockney.

"It is to go with us at once to Camellia Lodge on the Strand," said Lady Amy peremptorily.

"But if Mrs. Brand should be full, my lady?" ventured Burrard suggestively, yet trembling.

"Full?" echoed her mistress turning on her. "Why should she be full? In March! Have you any reason to suppose so?"

"N—no, my lady."

"Then don't make idle remarks;" and Lady Amy crossed the pier at a quick pace, wading through the half-melted snow to the tramway.

One of the pier officials recognizing her, touched his cap. She was almost grateful to the man; for she began to have

a babyishly lost and homesick feeling.

"Mrs. Brand *must* take me in," she said turning to her maid half-crying, "I *can't* go to other lodgings—I loathe lodgings; I loathe lodgings—and I will not go to an hotel."

Burrard replied that "it was the dull season."

"It is not!" exclaimed Lady Amy, "these are the Easter holidays."

Mrs. Brand's house *was* full (Lady Amy was not one for whom circumstances were often propitious), there was nothing to be done but to get other lodgings or go to an hotel.

Lady Amy chose to do the latter.

"How horrified mamma and Camille will be, to find me alone at an hotel!" said she with malicious glee.

At the hotel, as everywhere else in Wrode, she was well known. They gave



her a big sitting-room with a balcony and windows commanding a view of the water and the pier.

She seated herself by the fire, and while Burrard pulled off her wet boots, proceeded to count out her money. She had a tiny income of her own.

The store she counted was slender indeed.

She breathed a deep, romantic sounding sigh. "They'll all trust me in Wrode, however," said she to herself, and replaced the purse in her pocket. "I want some tea," aloud to Burrard. "Ring, please. Now you may go."

Lady Amy was by no means self-sufficing. All amusement and pleasure came to her from without. Her own society, her own thoughts, her small resource of needlework never diverted her as they do some people.

If the storm had not raged with such fury, she would have undoubtedly sent forthwith for some one to come and dine with her, for she had many friends in Wrode; a few intimate ones and scores of acquaintances. The weather being what it was, she could not send for any one, or venture out herself.

Morning came; bright and fair. A southerly wind had replaced the bleak north-easterly blast; the snow had vanished, the sun flashed on the gently heaving water.

Lady Amy put on one of her prettiest Paris dresses, and tripped forth alone into the streets as the clock struck twelve.

Although Wrode was emphatically a place with a season, it did not wear the deadly air of desertion when out of season, that many places do. It had even in

mid-winter, and during the town season, a gently bubbling gaiety. A dance every now and then ; a musical party ; numerous dinners ; innumerable afternoon teas.

Lady Amy turned into Division Street the street of shops and people, and on her high-heeled French boots, which were too tight for her, walked along the familiar pavement, and looked into the familiar shop windows.

The first acquaintance she met was a certain Mr. Smallfield, who had given more than one ball and dinner in her honour. He had been educated for a doctor ; but a rich maiden aunt, opportunely dying and leaving him her fortune, spared him the trouble of practising his profession.

He made a fine show of welcome when he met Lady Amy, and exhibited surprise by most striking means ; screwing up his

face until all his features seemed to change place, his mouth appearing to be where his nostrils had been a minute before, his eyebrows seceding from his eyes altogether and becoming lost under his hat.

"Hi! Why! 'Pon my word, Lady Amy Langdon—glad I'm sure—delighted. Mr. Langdon?"

"He is not with me?"

"The Countess?"

"I am alone," cut in Lady Amy again, stiffening her little neck.

"Ho! oh! where are you staying? My sister will want to go and call at once."

"At the Bridgnorth Hotel. How familiar it looks! The very same people are walking here whom I left six months ago."

"Yesterday, Division street was an altogether different thing from what it is

to-day—Lady Amy Langdon did not grace it with her presence,” answered Mr. Smallfield becoming broadly complimentary.

Lady Amy laughed a little, and a faint blush stole over her white cheeks. She wished that Camille could have been beside her. When she had a compliment paid her, she always wanted her husband to be by and to hear it; she imagined that he would set greater store by her to know how she was prized by others.

She parted from Mr. Smallfield, and after a few onward steps was stopped by a gentleman slowly coming down the street followed by a bull-dog of surlily dignified countenance. Before speaking to the dog's owner, Lady Amy spoke to and caressed the dog, who received her blandishments imperturbably.

“Lady Amy,” said this gentleman; but in no exclamatory fashion, his low, quiet

voice was in striking contrast with that of Mr. Smallfield, "I am glad to see you in Wrode again; I thought you were in Paris."

"Mr. Langdon is there," cut in Lady Amy quickly, determined not to have the truth forced from her again in an unavoidable answer to a direct question, "I am here alone; at the Bridgnorth Hotel."

Her interlocutor was too well bred to betray either surprise or curiosity; a few more words, and each went on their way.

In the photographer's window Lady Amy saw representations of herself sitting, standing, full length, half length, coloured, plain. In the window of the principal draper's shop was the facsimile of a yachting dress that had been made for her six months ago. In the china shop was conspicuously displayed a set, the duplicate

of one which her mother had given her for a wedding present.

A pleasant sense of importance swelled Lady Amy's youthful heart.

“This shall be our home,” thought she.  
“I will live here, or *nowhere*.”

At every step now, she met people whom she knew. With all there was an unpleasant sense of being at a disadvantage in having to reveal herself to be alone, husbandless, at an hotel in the dead season at Wrode.

She carried off her questionable position with an airy gaiety ; yet, all unknown to herself, she entered the hotel door with a defiance of manner she had not quitted it with, the haughty straightening of her neck as she answered, “I am alone !” had staid by her. Her glance was not downcast, or wavering now, but level and direct. She had undergone a subtle change in an hour.

A day or two passed. Lady Amy had neither written to her mother or heard from her. Already she had been treated with the warmest hospitality, invitations had come to her by the half dozen. She kept them all carefully.

"Camille will see by these that he is not of the slightest importance to me!" said she to herself, "that my position here, at least, is not at all affected by my being alone. It will be a good lesson to him! It does not in the least signify to me whether he comes or not!"

In proof of this last assertion, she walked to the window and looked eagerly down the pier through an opera glass.

A boat had just arrived; people were coming up in groups or singly.

After a while she turned away frowning. When other women would have sighed, she pouted or frowned.



One day, quite a week after she had left London, as she was sitting alone writing a note, the door opened, and Lady Rosehew appeared.

"Ah, mamma!" said she, hardly glancing at her mother, but looking with a strained eagerness beyond her, behind her.

Lady Rosehew was alone. A servant who had shown her to the room and opened the door for her, now closed it on her.

"I am alone, Amy, you see," said Lady Rosehew in her customary steady unemphatic manner.

"Yes, I see," replied Amy, trying to speak quietly; but her lips quivered; she was ashy pale.

"No reply to my letter, no sign of your husband; absolute want of response," said Lady Rosehew seating herself.

"I told you we had parted for ever, and

you did not believe me," said Lady Amy in a shaking voice. "Now I shall immediately sue for a divorce—what does one do first in such a case?" pushing her chair back from the table, and clasping her little hands tight together while the defiant at bay look deepened in her eyes.

"Wait, Amy, pray wait! I implore you to do nothing rash."

"I will take no advice of yours," cried her daughter violently. "You have humiliated me; *you wrote to him*—oh it sickens me—and he has taken no notice of your letter! I almost hate you as I think of it!"

"Amy!" cried Lady Rosehew, rising to her feet, while the crimson colour rushed over her brown skin, "I cannot stay and hear such fearful words from you."

"I don't care whether you go or stay," answered the undutiful daughter, "you

have given me the most miserable moment of my life."

Here Lady Rosehew expected to see blinding tears rush to her eyes, convulsive sobs shake her whole slight frame; but on the contrary, the bright eyes were undimmed, the voice firm, as she said, replacing her chair at the table,

"I shall write to Mr. Snaith," (the family lawyer.)

"But, Amy, what are you going to do with yourself, my child? you will come to me?"

"No, I intend to stay in Wrode. I know of a little house that will suit me; and into that little house I intend to go—alone!" She snatched a sheet of paper from its case, and her pen went scampering across it.

"One moment, Amy, where is this little house you speak of? what is its name?"

"Clematis Cottage, in Lewis Street;" answered Lady Amy grudgingly, as if she were parting with a valuable secret.

"You will not let me see your letter, Amy?"

"No, mamma; after what has taken place I can submit to no dictation from you. I am twenty-two; a woman; and quite capable of managing my own affairs."

"You are not," retorted her mother without heat, but incisively. "You are an ungovernable, unbridled *child*; and utterly incapable of management of any description. *Management!* you who can neither manage tongue nor temper, to talk of managing affairs so complicated as yours seem likely to become!" Hereupon Lady Rosehew, with her small figure very stiff and erect, left the room.

Lady Amy continued the letter which

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was to be the first step towards severing her from her husband ; and having signed, sealed and directed it—threw it in the fire !





## CHAPTER V.

### CLEMATIS COTTAGE.



FEW weeks found Lady Amy Langdon installed in the little house of which she had made mention ; attempting to live on two hundred a year, eighty of which went in house rent.

Lady Rosehew had been obliged to bend before her daughter's obstinate refusal to live with her.

“ We should only quarrel, mamma, from

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morning till night. It would be impossible for me to keep from continually reproaching you for the mortification you have brought on me," said Lady Amy.

Therefore, forced to abide by her bad-tempered daughter's decision, Lady Rosehew took a small house in a street parallel with Lady Amy's where she could command a view of her daughter's back windows.

The mother and daughter were on visiting terms, however.

No tidings of Camille Langdon reached his wife; as far as knowledge of him went, he might have been engulfed with Pharoah's host in the Red Sea.

More than one letter did she write to Mr. Snaith, with an elaborate statement of her grievances, and her desire to sue for a separation; but each letter shared the fate of the first.

"After all," communed Lady Amy with herself, as she watched the black ashes of what had been her letter gradually shrivelling to nothing, "am I not completely separated from him as it is? with not a sight, sound, look, or word to bridge over the gulf between us, or to remind me that I have a husband! Why should I take legal means to free myself, when I am free—most miserably, completely free! I don't want his money, poor Camille! Perhaps he never got mamma's letter; I am willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. He did love me! At the last, when he kissed me, and flung me from him, he loved me. He left me in the bondage of my love for him, and told me to be free! and he was in bondage to me too, for he loved me. Camille!" she stretched forth her hands, and pronounced the name aloud. "Having been



involuntarily humiliated in his eyes by mamma, why cannot I now voluntarily humiliate myself, and write to him, and beg him to come to me? but I cannot; no I cannot!"

Early spring slipped into late spring, late spring into early summer.

Clematis Cottage blossomed like the rose; with flowers cut and growing in all its little rooms; and that white rose, Amy herself, flittering about it. No one who saw frivolous, pleasure-seeking Lady Amy, with her bright, *debonnaire* beauty—no one who carelessly spoke of her as being "in single harness," "semi-detached" and such like—guessed what a wretched, restless heart she carried about with her!

From the low window of her drawing-room, she commanded a fine view of Mr. Smallfield's large, clumsy stone house

with its yellow inside blinds, and meagrely stocked conservatory; there, with a maiden sister, lived Mr. Smallfield, observing social and hospitable rights according to his light.

Lady Amy was in great demand at that square, squat abode; hardly a week passed without her dining there once, at least; sometimes twice and thrice.

As she was usually the woman of highest rank, it fell to her lot to be taken in to dinner by her host; thereby she reaped the full benefit of his contortions and grimaces, and dissections. For he abjured dinners *à la Russe*, and enveloping himself in a too odorous steam, dissected bird or beast—carve them he could not be said to do; the word is not fearfully suggestive and workmanlike enough, for his exploits with his razor-sharp knife.

To-night she dined with them; and

found a large party assembled in the stiff drawing-room ; four ladies seated on the ottoman turning backs and shoulders to one another ; four more grouped together near the window ; amongst these last Lady Amy discovered, with some surprise, her friend Gertrude Mountjoy ; rosy, self-satisfied, and superbly dressed.

But one person separated Miss Mountjoy from Lady Amy at the table ; this one person was a Mr. Conrady, the only son of a wine merchant who had lately died, leaving him the sole inheritor of a mammoth fortune.

Mr. Patrick Conrady was a dark young man, heavily built and featured ; his massive jaw and solemnly dull eyes told something of his nature ; but his face was otherwise so expressionless, that to tell from it anything of his character would have been as hopeless as to find out what

is o'clock by looking into the works of a watch.

He hated his name Patriek, and loved his money; he adored title, rank and position; it was the aim of his life—but I am telling too much.

Lady Amy found herself, as usual, entitled to take precedence of the other ladies—as usual found herself entitled to share the savoury steam at the foot of the table on Mr. Smallfield's right hand.

Conversation with Mr. Smallfield to-night proved to be uphill work; for he had rheumatism in his head, and alternately rubbed the afflicted side, and greedily drank some compound out of a huge glass. When the glass was empty, he invited the servant to refill it, by setting it down hard on the table and scowling at him. Wearied by her efforts at making talk—and her patience was

never of the most durable—Lady Amy at length desisted from them, and leaning forward a little, addressed her words to her friend Gertrude. Conrady (who had never before seen her) thereby had a close view of her piquant profile, unblemished skin, and waving golden brown hair; he also gave an appreciative attention to what she said in her self-forgetful utterly natural manner—the best of all manners for putting others at their ease. Lady Amy never thought before she spoke; never gave any heed as to how she was going to word her sentences, or how she must arrange her eyebrows, lips, and eyes, as she spoke; thus differing agreeably from Miss Mountjoy and others.

“ You will come and see me to morrow Gertrude ?” said she.

“ Yes, where are you ?”

"I have a den in this street ; only a few steps below here."

"And what is the name of your den ?"

"It has a remarkably cockney name—Clematis Cottage. I didn't name it," with a little laugh. The last words so palpably meant for Conrady, that he was on the point of saying "Oh," or "Ah, didn't you?" or something equally pregnant. He caught himself up just in time ; but a dark flush suffused his face.

"And how is Mr. Langdon ? He is here, of course ?" inquired Miss Mountjoy, who knew perfectly well that he was not.

"No, he is not," answered Lady Amy, her face hardening, as it always did, when she was obliged to declare her exact position.

"Are you living alone then ?" asked Miss Mountjoy, before Lady Amy could

say voluntarily that she was, which she always preferred doing.

An unpleasant fact which must be declared, is much better gratuitously announced than extorted by a direct question.

"Yes, I am alone," said Lady Amy simply.

She looked such a girl—almost a child—as she said it; at the same moment singling out a sugared cherry from the dish the servant held, that Conrady felt loneliness on her part to be a sort of injury to himself.

"And how are the little ones;" asked Lady Amy, alluding to Miss Mountjoy's little sister and brothers.

"Lucy is ailing; the boys are well. We have a good nursery governess for them at last. Daughter of a friend of papa's. You saw her last evening, Mr. Conrady."

"Did I?" vaguely. "Oh yes; I remember, a girl who looked as if she lived on strawberry jam."

"How very clever and odd of you to say that!" said Miss Mountjoy, giving him what she meant to be a taking look; but she allowed it to dwell on him too long, so making it cease to be taking and causing it to be simply bold.

It was he who looked away first, a little embarrassed.

When the ladies rose from the table, Lady Amy, getting up with an impetuosity that seemed to say, "Thank Heaven! at last!" knocked her chair over backwards with a crash.

Conrady to the rescue, delighted. The circumstance seemed to establish at once a sympathetic amenity between him and her.

"I'm always doing such things myself, only worse," he muttered.



"I have not improved on my old ways, Gertrude, you see," said Lady Amy laughingly to her friend. "I am always doing such things!" Her glance just touched Conrady's. She swept away.

Afterwards, in the drawing-room, when Gertrude had managed to get Conrady beside her, she gave a hearty concurrence with what her friend had said of herself.

"She is perpetually tripping over things; tumbling down steps, coming to grief——"

"The last thing I should have thought, to look at her," said Conrady, with a glance at Lady Amy's light figure.

"But I assure you she is!" eagerly. "Did not you notice that there was a bit broken off her tooth, her *front* tooth?"

"No, I did'nt."

"She fell down the pier steps on her way to somebody's yacht's boat."

"Does she like yachting?" inquired Conrady anxiously.

"I suppose so," answered Gertrude looking disgusted.

"Misery loves company," continued Mr. Conrady, "I wish you would introduce me to her. I am always doing those unfortunate kind of things myself."

With grudging heart, but unsparing smiles, Miss Mountjoy accorded him his request.

Whispering to her friend with a spiteful laugh "Amy, Mr. Conrady says that misery loves company, and he wants to be introduced to you;" she then motioned him forward, and presented him.

Misery, if impersonated by Mr. Conrady, evidently did love the company it had found in Lady Amy Langdon!



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE STORY.

**W**HILE Gertrude Mountjoy was faring on Mr. Smallfield's cheer, Georgie Glyn sat by an open window of the little Mountjoys' nursery. It was in the third story, and commanded a view of the water over a gently sloping, velvety lawn.

The tide was coming up, and the wind with it. The wind touched with reviving coolness the feverish cheeks of the child

Miss Glyn held in her arms, and stirred the curly locks of the boy kneeling beside her, with his elbows on her knees.

"Tell you a story, Rupert? Let me think. Well! Once once on a time there was a girl——"

"How old was she?" interrupted Rupert, who always demanded a strict attention to details.

She was about twenty."

"Twenty?" with obvious disapproval, "why that is *old*; it's as old as you are!"

"Then we'll have her younger."

"Yes, have her twelve; *I'm* twelve—and you're sure she was a girl, not a boy?"

"I am sure she was a girl; but I will have a boy in the story if you like."

"All right, go on." The story evidently began to commend itself to Rupert.

The little languid girl in Georgie's arms lay staring up into the soft blue eyes above her ; her lips pressed poutingly close, as if she never meant to open them again, her small boneless hands, each a loosely doubled fist.

"Once on a time," recommenced Georgie, "there was a girl—twelve years old—she lived in Paris, and from her dingy old window she could see the river run by—close, close——"

"Did she ever fish out of the window, as it was so close?" asked Rupert eagerly.

"No, never. She had not time. Not time even to lean out and look down on the river as she loved to do. For at this time I'm telling you of, she had a mother with a broken heart, and a father with a broken arm. As the father's painting was all that got them money to buy bread to eat, this was bad—I mean the broken arm. The broken heart was sad——"

"How did they know it was broken?" asked the realist of twelve, "they could'nt look inside of her, you know."

"They knew it was broken by her smile—that is the way to tell Rupert—and by her voice in speaking, and by the look in her eyes—eyes large and sunken, and blue, with never a tear in them. This girl, whose name was Georgette, often wished she could see tears in those weary eyes! Well! There they were, high up in the air of Paris, very near the top of an old stone house that the river ran beside. And the father with his broken arm could not paint, for it was his right arm; could not get any money for Georgette, and Georgette's mother, and this fretted him so that he fretted himself into a fever. The fever snapped at him as if it had been waiting ever so long for him—just as you may see a spider pounce on a fly when it is safe in its web. The mother,

who before had prayed for strength to bear the burthens laid on her, now lifted up heart and voice, and prayed in an agony of supplication for prosperity. She prayed for prosperity, and God sent her death. She died. God answered the prayer so"—

"I don't like this story," cut in Rupert in an aggrieved tone.

"Oh, Rupert! I think I had forgotten you, I was telling it to myself like a selfish creature. Let me begin another."

"You may tell me the end of Georgette first."

"It is only this. The father died too; and left his only daughter to go among strangers and earn her bread. He wrote a letter to a friend of his youth, and the friend—was friendly after his fashion. Now let me tell you a nice story. Once on a time there was a boy, twelve years old——"



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE GILDING LESSON.

**G**ERTRUDE MOUNTJOY wended her way to see her friend Lady Amy Langdon at about four o'clock the following afternoon. As she turned into Lewis' Street she was joined by Patrick Conrady, who walked by her side.

"I am on my way to see Lady Amy Langdon," said Gertrude.

"Are you?" returned Conrady, "I'm on my way there to call too."



"Oh! And may I ask what you think of my friend?"

Conrady struck his stick against the curb-stone, and his heavy face lighted up; but for a moment he did not answer. When he did, it was to give the highly edifying answer, "Why, I don't know."

"Don't you?" rejoined Miss Mountjoy, "then there is no use in saying anything more about her."

"Yes, there is. I want to know something about her. Is it true that she is going to be divorced?"

"I believe so," said Gertrude carelessly. "Why! Can this be the house? This atom of a place? Yes, Clematis Cottage."

They entered the gate, and rang. Burrard appeared at the door.

"Not at 'ome." She replied in an extremely uncertain and untruthful manner. Then suddenly. "I think her lady-

ship might see you, ma'am. Her ladyship's 'aving 'er gilding lesson."

"Her what?" asked Miss Mountjoy.

"A gilding lesson, Miss. Please to come in, and I will inquire if her ladyship will see you."

Gertrude and Conrady accordingly were shown into the little drawing-room. Gertrude, who had been inclined to feel a pitying scorn for the size and appearance of the little house outside, was now forced into abundant admiration and surprise.

Lady Amy's earnest will to have a pretty room to live in, had found a way.

The very darkest and very palest shades of blue in velvet and satin were cunningly mingled here, there, everywhere. The door was panelled in blue velvet, the walls hung with blue satin. Mirrors and brackets were mounted on blue velvet, the mantel-piece was hung with it, the chairs

and sofa covered with velvet and satin in alternate stripes.

Conrady opened his large mouth and stared about him, as if he had never seen any handsomer "interior" than that of a Caffre hut—as if the splendours of his own show place in ——shire had made no picture on his retina.

Presently Burrard reappeared.

"Would they please step into the dining-room."

They crossed the little passage, and found themselves in the presence of Lady Amy, and a fat man with a brush in one hand and gallipot in the other. Lady Amy, who was enveloped in a sort of pinafore and had various glittering splashes on her cheeks and chin, also had a brush in one hand and paint pot in the other. She and her instructor were gilding the frame of a mirror.

Lady Amy greeted her visitors pleasantly. The gilder took his departure.

"I thought, Gertrude, that you might like to see this. It is rather amusing. I took it up for something to do. I get so tired of sewing—and time is so long!" she sighed.

"But the smell and the mess it makes!" said Gertrude, couching her fastidiousness in very unfastidious terms.

"Yes, the varnish is strong," returned Lady Amy, "I hope it does not make you feel faint, Mr. Conrady?"

"Faint? Oh, Lord, no!"

Lady Amy divested herself of her pinafore, and led the way back to the drawing-room, where she sent pangs of various sorts through the heart of Miss Mountjoy. For Miss Mountjoy had begun to look on Conrady as a possible provider of the good things of this life for herself; now she

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saw him becoming bewitched by her too charming friend, who had no right to be charming Gertrude indignantly thought.

As tea was being brought in, a wagonette was seen to stop at the gate.

"I told them to call for me here," said Gertrude glancing out. "It was too far to walk home."

"Is Mrs. Mountjoy there?" asked Lady Amy, going to the window.

"No; only Miss Glyn and the children."

"They must come in," said Lady Amy, "a shower has come up; it is raining fast."

"It will not hurt them," said Gertrude carelessly.

"They shall not stay there in the rain," said Lady Amy decidedly. "Mr. Conrady, please go out and bring that young lady and the children in."

Out rushed Conrady bare headed, with eager obedience.

"Lady Amy Langdon wishes you to come in," said he bluntly to Georgie, opening the door of the wagonette. Georgie after an instant's hesitation descended; as he assisted her, Conrady fixed his dull, heavy eyes on her fair little face, in a brazen stare.

"Will you be good enough to lift the children out?" said Georgie with a gentle calmness.

He did so. They all entered the house together. Miss Glyn not vouchsafing one glance at Mr. Conrady.

Lady Amy insisted on the children having weak tea and bread and butter. Mr. Conrady, after one or two mishaps with the cream jug, made himself useful. Lady Amy, generously leaving him to Gertrude, began talking kindly to the

little governess whose fair gentle face pleased her. She found her intelligent and well-bred ; and notwithstanding her timid, self-distrustful manner, able to say spirited things.

On parting with her, she shook hands warmly, and gave her one of the bewitching looks usually reserved for the opposite sex.

" I shall see you again some time soon," said she.

Conrady lingered atfter them.

" And me," said he in a low tone, " won't you say that you'll see *me* some time soon ?"

" I'll say to you Mr. Conrady, that you are very wanting in civility not to see Miss Mountjoy and Miss Glyn to their carriage, as they have not a footman with them. Go at once."

" May I come back if I put 'em in ?"

“If you choose.”

He did choose. He was lost for ever to Gertrude Mountjoy when he left Clematis Cottage; and Amy had gained—what?

As the door closed on his clumsy figure, she threw herself back in her chair with a sigh, and a mocking smile; the one accompanying the other like merry words set to a sad air.








## CHAPTER VIII.

### HELLMUTH LODGE.

S July drew near its end, and the season near its beginning, the people of Wrode began to read with heightened interest the names of recent arrivals which were chronicled in the weekly newspaper, The Spy.

Amongst others was observed the name of Mr. Chilian Grey, Hellmuth Lodge.

Hellmuth Lodge, notwithstanding its forbidding name, was an artistic little

abode, situated half way up the windiest, hilliest, sunniest street in Wrode. It had carefully clipped close hedges, trim green gates, a picturesque, quaint aspect, and the most lovingly clinging ivy, and Virginian creepers, and starry passion flowers.

It had been its fate to be lived in always by interesting, affording people, therefore the Wrode folk had an illogical belief that whoever its tenant might be, that tenant was not a person to be overlooked.

“Such nice people always had had it.”

Various eyes put themselves on the watch for Mr. Chilian Grey; but time passed on, and Mr. Chilian Grey gave no sign of self. Hellmuth Lodge looked trim, tidy, well looked after, and desolate.

One evening as Amy, Miss Mountjoy,

and two or three men were sauntering up Hill Street after a day on the water, they saw—being walked, trotted, cantered past in the road opposite Mr. Chilian Grey's front windows—a pair of dark brown ponies. Evidently they were having their paces shown off—but to whom? No buyer *in posse* was apparent. The Venetian blinds of Hellmuth Lodge were as close drawn as if its inhabitants were asleep, or dead; the man mounted on one of the ponies, however, cast a confident eye up in the direction of the closed jealousies, and with an obvious assurance of being watched, showed off the ponies to the best advantage to their unseen spectator.

Lady Amy paused.

“Charming ponies!” said she enviously, “and evidently being shown off to the mysterious Mr. Chilian Grey, who is probably peeping at them from behind

those closed blinds. Let us stand here a moment, pretending to look at the ponies ; and if Mr. Chilian Grey will not give us the privilege of seeing him, give him the privilege of seeing us."

"Oh, Amy!" exclaimed Gertrude, in a tone of expostulation, yet, nevertheless, standing still and posing herself.

"After all," said Amy, instantly moving on, "we do not know who may be looking at us—what monster of iniquity, or worse, what ogre of vulgarity."

They walked away. Lady Amy in her fanciful yachting dress ; her sailor hat at the back of her head ; the frou-frou hair which fringed her forehead blown lightly hither and thither by the evening wind. As she spoke to her companions she smiled brightly, showing shining little teeth. She seemed amply provided with health and happiness.

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In reality she was amply provided with amusement which had no commingling of happiness ; and the gaiety of her manner was often forced to hide the aching of a sick, mortified heart.

She who had always been love-protected, was now left to drift alone over the summer sea which wrecks so many. Admiration, pleasure, excitement were all ready to her hand, and furnished the long bright days of her unshielded life with perils.

Poor Lady Amy !

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The same wind that had played caressingly with her bright hair, treacherously inflicted neuralgia on her blue-veined temples.

The day after that gay one spent on board Mr. Conrady's yacht, found her seated over a wood fire, holding her head in her hands, and listening to the melan-

choly soughing of the wind, and sharp pattering of rain against the pane.

As a severer throb than ever darted through her temples, she started up with a wild exclamation; (she always revolted against pain) and going to the bell, rang it violently, saying to Burrard who appeared.

"Toast a slice of bread, soak it in brandy, pepper it well with red pepper, and bring it to me *hot*!"

"Oh, my lady! You're never going to"——

"Yes, I am. Make haste. I am in torture."

"But your ladyship's cheek was blistered the last time—and going out to dinner to-night"——

"Be good enough to do as I tell you," said Lady Amy, stamping her foot.

Burrard started backwards, and retired,

presently to return bringing, under protest, the brandied, peppered toast, smoking hot.

Lady Amy laid it against her cheek and temple, tied a handkerchief tightly over her head to keep the toast in place, and flung herself back in her chair, vowing she could not, *would not* bear this pain.

As Burrard was leaving the room, Lady Rosehew entered with a newspaper in her hand.

"Neuralgia, Amy?" asked she.

"Tortures!" was all that her daughter replied.

"Tortures and toast. Amy, I beg you will bear the tortures and take off the toast, unless you have given up dining at the Mountjoy's; but I suppose you have, since you cannot mean to go with your cheek one huge blister as it was before."

"I do mean to go; I don't care whether my cheek is blistered or not."

Lady Rosehew, long ago convinced of the hopelessness of even the most cogent argument with her daughter, said no more; but unfolding the newspaper she had brought, handed it to her saying,

"I thought you might not have seen that?" indicating a paragraph with her finger.

It was the advertisement of a book translated from the French by Camille Langdon.

"No, I have not seen it," said Lady Amy, eagerly. "It is the first token I have had of his existence since I left him."

"My dear, dear child, why will you not write to him?"

Her daughter was silent.

"A translation," said she presently, "I thought he despised translating. I'll get the book; no, I will not! I should loathe the sight of it!"



"Why, Amy? You have no objection to M. Jules de Chateau-Renard, have you?"

"Yes; he wrote what—*he* thinks it worth while to translate. I hate Jules de—whatever his name is!"

"I wish your husband was here, taking care of you. You will submit to no control of mine. I see you gradually becoming drawn down in the vortex with just such misery as a woman must feel, who stands by powerless, watching a child actually being drawn under by cruel water."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Lady Amy, opening her eyes, "I have not often heard you say such a romantic sounding thing as that. What do you mean? I am only enjoying myself as other people do."

"You make me miserable!" said Lady Rosehew earnestly.

"I am your tormentor, am I not?" returned her daughter lightly.

"This Mr. Conrady—" began Lady Rosehew, and paused.

"Well, what about this Mr. Conrady?"

"He is too much with you; you are on board his yacht far oftener than you should be, and I hear he intends buying Seven Towers and spending much of his time here. You know, Amy, how you will be talked about, unless you are discretion itself."

"I don't care," answered Amy, defiantly.

"And you will not hear one word of opposition from me."

"No," with angry acquiescence, "not one word; *not one word!* And now here is the postman, I am thankful to say; for he will bring an end to this useless and disagreeable conversation."

Presently Burrard entered with two letters for her mistress. One, in a large blue envelope lined with muslin—a registered letter, which on being opened was found to contain a considerable number of banknotes.

Lady Amy flushed crimson, and for want of some other means of venting her excitement, tore off the toast, and flung it on the floor; the letter was about to follow it, when Lady Rosehew stayed her hand.

“It is from Camille, of course,” cried Amy; “I do not want his money, I want——” She wrested her wrist from her mother’s grasp, and throwing the money from her, hid her face in her hands, saying, “I will not spend a penny of it.”

“Then I shall spend it for you,” rejoined her mother calmly, “I shall pay

some of your bills with it, and be only too thankful to do so."

Gathering up the banknotes, she put them in her pocket, and then going to her daughter's davenport opened one of the drawers, where many and crumpled blue papers were carelessly stuffed. Lady Rosehew looked them over with a grave face.

"I do not see any *receipted* bills," said she.

"I have none. Mamma, listen to this letter from Mrs. Freke." Lady Amy had taken her face from between her hands, and was reading her other letter. "Listen, mamma:—

"My object in writing to you is chiefly to introduce to you a young nephew of mine, George Blaggrave, who has been ordered to Wrode for his health. Being rather out of the common run of young

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men, he needs a word or two of explanation. Always inclined to be reserved and misanthropical; busy all day and half the night with pen or pencil, he has become exceedingly melancholy, and almost a recluse, lately, since his health has failed; for he had a hemorrhage from the lungs not long ago. He has neither father, nor mother, nor sister, and will submit to no looking after from me. He has an invincible indifference to women, but likes children—as you approach more nearly to a child than a woman, I thought I could not do better than commend him to your kindness. Pray, dear Lady Amy, if it is not asking too much, allow him to feel that you are something more than a mere acquaintance, and believe that by so doing, you will confer a great favour on

“Your’s always sincerely

“LUCY FREEKE.”

“Cool!” was Lady Amy’s comment, as she ceased reading. “Yet after all, is it cool? for Mrs. Freke remembers the days of Paris, and the constant attention and kindness she showed me. ‘Pen or pencil’—a moping poet—moon-struck I suppose. ‘An invincible indifference to women’—a silly boy’s sillier affectation. ‘Allow him to feel that you are something more than a mere acquaintance’—if I do not like the youth, I shall not even allow him to feel that I am a mere acquaintance. ‘He likes children’—will he expect me to have dolls for him? Do you know mamma,” with a rapid change of tone, “I should not mind setting up a doll’s house.”

“Then do so, my dear, and you and this interesting young man can play with it together. I take it as a favour to myself that you have torn off your peppered

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toast; allow me to thank you, Amy. You will have nothing worse now than one crimson cheek, and one white one. Good-bye. I will call for you at a quarter to eight. Please be ready."

Lady Rosehew had risen as she spoke, and hereupon went away.

Lady Amy kindly kept her mother waiting only ten minutes. As she swept through her little garden to the gate, her rose-coloured dress trailing behind her, her bright head uncovered, the sound of jingling bells was heard coming down the street. They were on the collars of the brown ponies that she had admired the day before.

The brown ponies slackened their pace as they passed Clematis Cottage; Lady Amy looked inquisitively at the dog-cart behind them and at its occupant.

The rain had ceased; a red sunset still

flared in the western sky; it threw its rosy light on Lady Amy's fair young face and festally clothed figure, and gleamed on her gold-threaded brown hair.

The man in the dog-cart had the light behind him; and his hat pulled low over his eyes further shadowed his face. His venerable grey beard blew in the evening wind, and his grizzled locks showed distinctly at the back of his head.

"At last! I have seen the mysterious Mr. Grey at last!" said Lady Amy to her mother, as she entered the brougham. "And he has seen me," laughing, "there is no doubt of that! He gave me a keen, long look out of the corners of his eyes. A quite old man! He is not worthy of those pretty gray ponies. He ought to have a steady old cob." Then she began talking of other things and forgot Mr. Chilian Grey.

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Mr. Conrady was among the guests dining at the Mountjoys, for Gertrude had not yet "given up the ship." As usual, his attention centred oppressively on Lady Amy Langdon. I use the word oppressively, because she sometimes felt stifled by his heavy gallantries, his clumsy compliments, his weighty admiration, as by a fog-clogged atmosphere. Yet partly to amuse herself, partly to frustrate the designs of Miss Mountjoy, she permitted him to make her the summit of his ambition, the object of his passion, the *summum bonum* of his existence. From her pre-fix of Lady, to the tips of her slight fingers he loved her ; with a wrecking, obstinate, at-all-points-satisfied love.

Acutely delicious was the thought of having on his card, Mr. and Lady Amy Conrady ; and quite as poignant the pleasure of anticipating a time when the

woman herself, in her brilliant youthful beauty should be his own. Meanwhile, she was another man's. As far as he knew, she had taken no actual measures to free herself from the other man, although it was on all sides supposed that she was about to sue for a divorce.

Miss Glyn was found to be in the drawing-room after dinner. Lady Amy instantly flew towards her, knocking over a little table by the way—and seating herself beside her, chattered gaily to her. Miss Mountjoy also crossed the room, and placed herself at her friend Amy's side.

“Gertrude,” said the latter, “do you like poets? I have had one put under my care.” She then went on to tell of Mrs. Freke's letter, and of Mr. George Blagrove.

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"Is he well off?" asked Miss Mountjoy, shamelessly.

"How you love money, Gertrude," said Amy, looking at her thoughtfully.

"Mrs. Freke said nothing about his pecuniary affairs, and I know nothing of him except what she wrote me. Do you adore money, Miss Glyn? You do not look as if you did."

"I despise money, and I despise what is called *love*," said Georgie, with her usual gentle gravity.

"Dear me! What do you leave worth living for?" asked Miss Mountjoy, in a ruffled manner.

"A great many things."

Here the gentlemen entered, and Mr. Conrady came lounging up to them.

"Here is a young lady who says that she despises love and money," said Lady Amy.

"Does she;" with sullen indifference.

An unexpressed antagonism had arisen between him and Miss Glyn. One of those undefined ambiguities that are as hard to deal with as acknowledged facts.

"Do you agree with her?" asked Miss Mountjoy.

"No, not by any manner of means; I could go as far as a fellow I know, who always kept a postage-stamp that came on some note or other, because a particular girl had—ha—licked it."

Lady Amy shuddered. "What a *lout* you are!" thought she, glancing away from him, as he looked with heavy admiration at her.

He had perspicacity enough to notice her expression.

"Shocked, Lady Amy?" asked he in a tone of grovelling self-abasement. She

shrugged her shoulders for a reply, and getting up, walked away.

He followed her, asking her the questions he always did, now, "What was she going to do with herself to-morrow? Should he see her? Would she come for a sail?" His manner was a strange mingling of fervency, and halting self-distrust. She went back to her former place beside Miss Glyn; still he followed her. In truth, love, as shown forth by him, seemed a despicable thing enough.

At length Gertrude succeeded in un-attaching him, and bore him away with her to some distant part of the room. He did not prove a very gratifying companion; for cutting her short in the midst of a story she was telling him, he inquired abruptly.

"Where on earth is Mr. Langdon? Is he a myth?"

"Not at all," answered Miss Mountjoy, hiding her vexation by a laugh. "He is a very good-looking reality. I do not know where he is; and I am sure, from something that Lady Amy said to me yesterday, she has not the least idea herself. I believe," deliberately and intending her words to cut like a knife—"I believe she hopes every day to see him here. I believe that until she knows definitely that he has really left her, she will take no steps to be separated from him!"

As she finished speaking, and saw a blank look of misery creep over her companion's face, she opened her fan and fanned herself with an air of triumph. Furtively she watched Conrady, and saw the look of dismay change to another which was inexplicable to her.

After taking him out on a balcony in

the moonlight, and finding that he and the moonlight were equally silent and uncompanionable, she returned to the drawing-room, and charitably allowed him to go to Lady Amy again; keeping by his side, however.

A handsome little Frenchman—Marquis de Thomé, who with his wife was dining there—had begun an animated conversation with Lady Amy, who with her usual generosity where other women were concerned, drew Miss Glyn into it as often as she could.

M. de Thomé had the manners of a finished courtier, but an imperfect knowledge of English, which he persisted in speaking, however, notwithstanding that Amy and Miss Glyn spoke French thoroughly well.

“I did not saw you on the pe-e-are, yesterday,” he was saying with an unsur-

passable grace, as Conrady and Gertrude came up.

"I *was* there though," Lady Amy answered, "but I was sitting in a shady nook reading '*Léa*.'"

"Ah, you have read him?" returned M. de Thomé gravely, "he is a very handsome book."

Gertrude and Conrady smiled rudely. Amy and Miss Glyn preserved their gravity; but Amy to prevent M. de Thomé having a possible uncourteous laugh inflicted on him, turned to Gertrude saying,

"I have seen Mr. Chilian Grey; he drove his pretty ponies past as I was getting into the brougham to come here. He is quite old, grey-haired, grey-bearded. If you have any curiosity to see him, you will know him by those ponies and their bells."

"I havn't the slightest, *now*," said



Miss Mountjoy indifferently; "and they are beginning to tell such strange stories about him. They say he is an opium eater; that he drives about all night, and sleeps all day. He is having thick wooden outside shutters put on all his windows; they say he is afraid people will come and look in on him, and"——

"I think I shall go to Trouville the day after to-morrow," broke in Conrady, irrelevantly.

M. de Thomé seeming to be horrified at such discourtesy towards a lady, walked away, after one cold look at the unconscious Mr. Conrady,

"Shall you?" said Lady Amy carelessly.

"On your lovely, *lovely* yacht?" asked Miss Mountjoy, in tones of heartiest interest.

"Yes; on board the yacht."

“ And shall you be gone long ? ” inquired Miss Mountjoy, looking as if a blight were about to visit her.

Perhaps she confessed to her heart that she loved the richest man she knew—loved Mr. Patrick Conrady ;—if so, love was an unlovely thing thought Georgie Glyn.





## CHAPTER IX.

### THE HANDSOME STRANGER.

**M**R. GEORGE BLAGRAVE, in fulfilment of a promise extorted from him by his aunt, rang the bell of Clematis Cottage one stifling August afternoon between three and four. He was admitted, and shown into the fairy drawing-room where Lady Rosehew and her daughter were seated together deep in earnest conversation.

Lady Amy, who when she had thought

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of him at all, had imagined him a pale, study-worn, stooping, emaciated being, learnt that a man may have one weak lung, and may find a permanent and alluring charm in brush or pen, which women and frivolous amusements are powerless to give, yet may have broad shoulders, the number of inches that go to make a tall man, and the features, colouring and expression that will make a handsome face.

Surprised at his appearance, she was unreasonable enough to be provoked with him for being other than she had fancied him.

He was very sensitive, and keenly alive to impressions of all sorts ; somehow her manner, as she greeted him, gave him the idea that she regretted not having said "not at home" to the servant.

This made an inauspicious beginning to

the acquaintance. He had not been there ten minutes when a smiling, high-coloured, well-dressed young lady was shown into the room. To this young lady, Miss Mountjoy, he was introduced; but notwithstanding her exertion to make herself agreeable to him, he took his leave after a call of fifteen minutes' duration, without having an agreeable impression made on him by any of the three ladies.

"Amy," said Lady Rosehew, as the door closed on him, "you were not at all nice to that young man with his melancholy deep eyes."

"I could not possibly be," answered Lady Amy forcibly, "because my shoes hurt me excruciatingly. How *can one* be nice with a shoe murdering one's toes? You were very limp and silent yourself, mamma!"

"It was so exceedingly warm," said

Lady Rosehew, "I never can make myself agreeable at three o'clock of a stifling August afternoon."

"Now that he is gone, I am sorry I did not say prettier things to him," said Lady Amy, "for he was very handsome and clever, and unlike most other young men. What a charming way of speaking he had; and a look as if he understood all the workings of one's brain! However, Gertrude was amiability itself, as she always is—to men" (under her breath). "He must have been pleased with Gertrude."

Miss Mountjoy continued to smile with her lips, but she was nettled at her friend's mocking tone.

"Mr. Conrady has returned from Trouville," said she, changing the subject, "he walked part of the way here with me; I *begged* him to come in and see you, but he positively refused. By the way,

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Amy, he says he saw Mr. Langdon at Trouville, looking very flourishing, and amusing himself well apparently."

Amy's face became pale and rigid.

"Did he?" answered she in a low tone.

"Did he say anything else about him? who he was with, or anything?"

"He said he was constantly with some people, but he did not know who they were," rejoined Miss Mountjoy, who was repeating accurately what it was Conrady's wish that she should repeat.

Lady Amy and her mother were silent for a moment. Then Lady Amy began to talk hurriedly about an amateur concert which was in train, and in which she and Miss Mountjoy were to be performers.

Miss Mountjoy, on her return homewards, espied the man she had just met—Mr. Blaggrave—sauntering along the sands

beneath the esplanade where she was walking. She altered her course a little ; and descending to the beach, in a moment had met him face to face.

“ Has she not left off smiling since I saw her last ? ” thought he to himself, regarding her as she paused, saying, “ I am looking for my little brothers ; they are playing here somewhere. I want them to walk home with me, I do so dislike walking alone.”

Here Blagrove, although he thought all this unutterably silly, turned and strolled along by her side, listening with what patience he might to her prattle. There was more method in it than he imagined ; for by her few, and seemingly artless, questions, she gleamed some knowledge of himself and his affairs. She learnt that he had been to certain places ; where he had been ; and how.



"Oh, there they are!" exclaimed she, indicating a group collected out on the extreme verge of the sand, where the wavelets came curdling in, curved and foamy; the group comprised three bare-legged boys busily constructing sand fortifications, a little pale girl, who was clinging to the hand of a young lady, with such a sweet face that even the indifferent Blaggrave could not help noticing it.

Miss Mountjoy stopped. "Georgie!" called she; and went unheard.

"Would *you* mind calling to them," then said she, turning confidingly towards Mr. Blaggrave, "my voice is not strong enough?"

In his present weak state of health, *shouting* was the very thing that he would have avoided doing, nevertheless, although still more confirmed in his opinion that

women were bores and idiots, he lifted up his voice and shouted.

"Georgie! I suppose that's the name you wished called," said he, thinking it the name of one of the boys.

"Y—yes it will do. Georgie is Miss Glyn. I call her Georgie, because she is not quite an ordinary nursery governess; she is the daughter of a friend of papa's," continued Gertrude condescendingly.

"She heard me!" said Blaggrave regretfully, seeing that Miss Glyn, accompanied by the little girl, was making her way towards them.

"Georgie," said Miss Mountjoy as they came up to her, "tell the boys to put on their shoes and stockings; I want you all to walk home with me. It is getting late."

The boys, who thinking something remarkable must have occurred, or be about

to occur, from the unusual sight of their elder sister on the sands, had approached near enough to be spoken to.

"Boys," said Georgie obediently, "put on your shoes and stockings; your sister wants us to walk home with her."

"I *shan't*," said Rupert, the eldest, "because mamma said we might stay out till six; and I shan't go a minute before six, nor a second." With that he rushed away followed by the other two.

The little spoilt girl here set up a lamentation, protesting that she would not go home with Gertrude.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Gertrude, half laughing, half angry, "what a disobliging family I have got," and she walked on, thinking that Blgrave would follow her.

But Blgrave followed his inclination instead, which at that moment was a strong

one, and staid where he was, looking from the lovely face of the little girl to the sweet one of her governess. He said without embarrassment.

“I thought that Miss Mountjoy would introduce me to you, so that I could apologize for having shouted your name at the top of my voice; but as she did not, pray allow me to tell you that I did not know it was your name. I thought it belonged to one of the boys with you.”

“It does not in the least matter,” said Georgie quietly, then with an evanescent smile, “in case you should ever wish to call to them again, I will tell you their names: Rupert, Frank, and Louis.”

“And Lily,” supplemented the little girl, feeling herself overlooked.

Blaggrave raised her small face by the chin, and looked into the large hazel eyes with their far away gaze. “A little white

flower," said he to himself, "how I should like to make a sketch of you some day." Then he released her chin from his gentle hold, and lifting his hat to Miss Glyn, walked slowly away.

Georgie stood where he had left her; perfectly still; her eyes fixed musingly on the shining sand.

A few days afterwards, she was seated on the same sands; her work in her hand, Lily beside her, the boys at play a little distance off, when Mr. Blgrave approached her with his slow, listless step. As he came in front of her he hesitated for an instant, then paused, saying:

"I should like very much to make a sketch of that little face"—glancing at Lilly—"have I your permission?"

"Mine!" said Georgie, looking up with soft surprised eyes; "oh, yes, you have

my permission certainly. Lily—this—gentleman is going to make a picture of your face, you don't mind, do you?"

The child shook her head shyly. Blagrove threw himself down on the warm dry sand, and taking out his sketch-book, commenced operations. As he became absorbed in his work (which he carried on quite silently) Georgie stole furtive but scrutinizing looks at him, and found him to her thinking the very best looking man she had ever seen. It was not that his features were so accurately handsome, but they and his expression gave an idea of mental and moral force, combined with rare tenderness of nature. It was a reserved melancholy face, yet strangely fiery, puzzlingly spirited.

Lily, half frightened at his long keen looks at her, had shrunk back against

Miss Glyn; the flaxen head rested upon her black sleeve.

Suddenly Blgrave shifted his gaze from the child, and found the girl's soft eyes fixed on him in gentle scrutiny. She looked away from him, but he continued looking at her.

The warm light of an August afternoon covered the water with an iridescent glory; the houses on the opposite shore stood out bold and bright in the red sunlight; wafts of music came from the distant pier-head, borne hither in fitful sighs of melody by the west wind. Children and dogs ran and romped about them on the shining sands. The sea-wall, beneath whose shelter they were seated, threw a sharply defined shadow out in front of them, over the level dark boundary of which the shadow of a hat went bobbing along occasionally and disappeared.

In a few moments he handed her his sketch to look at; she took it in her hand, smiled, blushed; for he had not only sketched Lily's ideal, innocent baby loveliness, but her own sweet face,

"Me!" cried Lily, vastly pleased.  
"You! And the stone wall."

"It is excellent," said Georgie, giving it back to him. "How delightful to be able to draw like that! I wish I could."

"Perhaps you have never tried?"

"Indeed, I have; often—my father was a painter."

"Yes, I know, I have heard of him," said the young man. "Do you think the likeness good of yourself?"

"As well as I can tell it is good; rather flattered."

She said the last words quite simply; he could not suspect her of being an angler for compliments with that face and



manner ; so before answering her he looked at his sketch critically.

“ No, I don't think it is flattered,” said he.

Seeing that he had embarrassed her a little—for she was very shy—he went on quickly. “ Mrs. Mountjoy was kind enough to send me an invitation to dine with them last evening ; I hope my refusal at the eleventh hour did not give her an uneven number ?”

“ It did,” answered Miss Glyn, “ but they were not at all angry with you ; they hardly dared to hope you would come,” with a slight mischievous smile.

“ Why, pray ?” Then, before she could reply, “ I should have answered the invitation in proper time, only I did not get it until my return on the very evening for which I was asked—from a long expedition into the country.”

"Ah," returned Georgie, "that was how it was!"

"Did they think it was *my way* to leave it as I did?"

"To tell you the truth," answered Georgie candidly, and losing her reserve, "they think that the ways of people who write or paint, are different from those of the rest of the world."

"So they are."

Georgie sighed. The ways of her own poor father had indeed been sadly different from those of the people she was now thrown among.

"Yes," said she, "they are. Mrs. Mountjoy had heard that you never went anywhere; but she was anxious to have you come, if she could. She knew an aunt of your's I think."

"Ah, yes. Mrs. Freke. She knows everybody. If they ask me again I shall go."

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At this point, their conversation was interrupted by the sudden appearance of Miss Mountjoy, who, spying them from over the wall, now descended on them.

"I saw that you were sketching," said she, "and could not resist coming down to have a peep. The view is pretty from here."

"I have not been sketching the view," said Blagrove, springing to his feet. "I have been drawing your little sister."

"Pray let me look at it."

Miss Mountjoy seated herself with an air of enjoyment she was far from feeling, and took the reluctant Lily on her lap.

He showed it to her. As she looked, a grim expression settled for an instant on her face, and was chased away by smiles.

"Very good of both! oh, how clever! How I wish you would do one of me!"

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"Delighted!" said Blgrave, in a tone of moody dissatisfaction.

"Well do it now!" said Miss Mountjoy with affected naïveté, and directing what she considered a conquering look at him.

Blgrave, inwardly fuming, and outwardly not exhibiting a very benign expression, reseated himself, and opened his sketch book at a blank page.

Should he make it caricature? He was half tempted by his familiar demon to do so. This was the very sort of woman he disliked; what malign influence shot her, all irritatingly unconscious, and provokingly blind across his path?

"Now while you draw, I'll talk," said Gertrude cheerfully. (He hated what is called a 'cheery' manner, either in man or woman). "I'll tell you something extremely funny that I have just heard

from Lady Amy. Do you know a Mrs. Buck?"

"No," said Blaggrave gloomily.

"Well, never mind. This Mrs. Buck wrote an invitation to that amusing Major Wightwick—perhaps you know him; a man with a turned up nose?"

"No, I don't."

"Oh, well, the nose is part of the story. This Mrs. Buck wrote an invitation to Major Wightwick:—'Mrs. Buck (née Fitz-Azor) requests the pleasure of Major Wightwick's company on such an evening;' to which he replied by saying, 'Major Wightwick (*nez retroussé*) has much pleasure in accepting the kind invitation of Mrs. Buck (née Fitz-Azor) for &c.' Wasn't that funny?"

"Very funny," answered Blaggrave, forcing a laugh, and hurriedly dashing in

a background to the face he had conscientiously portrayed.

"And this was amusing; Mr. Conrady told me this, he heard it himself at Trouville. Lady Sterndale, who poses for *the* Mrs. Grundy of Mrs. Grundies, allowed Lady Gayford—who would have liked to pose for a friend of Lady Sterndale's—to offer her homage of every description, and even went so far as to receive it graciously; but on parting with her kissed her on both cheeks like a nun, saying. 'Good-bye, dear; *so* sorry I *can't* know you in London!' Good, wasn't it?" and Gertrude laughed.

"Good?" echoed Blgrave vaguely, "good for what? for whom?"

"Oh, I don't know," answered Miss Mountjoy, rather at a loss, "when I say good, I mean amusing."

"It does make rather a good story.

You say the person who told you heard it ?”

“ Yes ; heard it.”

“ Mr. Conrady seems to have heard and seen a great deal in his three days at Trouville,” said Georgie quietly.

Miss Mountjoy looked at her as if to say. “ How dare you speak !”

A look whose offensiveness Blaggrave did not fail to discern ; and it made anger overwhelm him. He could not resist avenging Miss Glyn with his pencil. In a moment he had politely handed Miss Mountjoy her pencilled portrait to look at.

Gertrude gave a little scream ; the colour flew to her cheeks. Then mastering herself to dissemble, and doing it well, she smiled, shook her head saying.

“ Flattered ! I’m not half as good-looking as that.” Then more naturally if

less amiably added, "does it really look like me?"

"Ask Miss Glyn," said Blagrove.

"Indeed I will not. I beg that you will not show it to any one—flattered as it is!" drawing down the corners of her mouth.

"It looks like you, certainly," said Blagrove who had risen to his feet, "but it is not flattered, I assure you." He spoke in his usual tone of earnest gravity. Then saying good-morning, he walked away.

The smile died quickly from Miss Mountjoy's lips. She looked after him with an angry frown; turning to Miss Glyn, and still frowning, she said.

"Do you come here to meet men every day?"

"Gertrude, you know I do not!" said Georgie firmly.



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"I know that you *did* to-day!"

"I did not come to meet him. I had no idea of seeing him. He stopped as he was walking past, and asked me if he might sketch Lily; ought I to have refused?"

"Of course you ought. If it happens again—anything of this sort—I shall feel bound to tell mamma. What a—a—" she hesitated for a satisfactory word of description—"stick he is!" She scrambled to her feet. "I hope you are not a manœuvring little thing such as one reads of in books; of course you have heard us talking of this Mr. Blgrave, and know that he is, or will be, a good match?"

"Gertrude," said Georgie, low and earnestly, "do believe me. I had no idea of seeing him here to-day. I have not thought whether he is—I have not

thought anything about him. I am not a manœuvrer. The very word has a hateful sound to me."

"I'll believe you when I find out what you really are under all that shyness, and coyness, and simplicity," was Gertrude's not very generous reply, as she walked away, leaving Georgie vexed indeed, but not overcome with any emotion of any sort; for only a sense of wrong-doing on her own part, or a real trouble, had power to disturb her calm, pure soul; and this annoyance did not even ruffle the smooth surface overlying its crystal depths.





## CHAPTER X.

### THE FATAL STEP.

“**H**E says he saw Mr. Langdon at Trouville looking very flourishing, and amusing himself well apparently!” The common place words rung in Lady Amy’s ears; haunted her for hours, days, and rankled deep. So deep that they impelled her to the step she had yet hesitated to take.

“Well! happy! gay! with some of his reckless Bohemian friends most likely.

Not remembering her from day's end to day's end. Or when he did remember her, thinking of her as a money-needing thing, requiring a share of his insufficient means." Amy, brooding over these thoughts in moments between excitement and excitement, when vitality was lowest, and her mood most depressed, goaded herself into the madness of action and wrote a fourth letter setting forth her case to Mr. Snaith.

This letter, unlike its predecessors, she sent; and felt that the beginning of the end had come at last. The end of the life she had hoped to be happy in; the end of days filled with Camille's voice, glances, caresses; that had been—ah, how deeply dear to her she knew now, when it was too late! The end of her happiness; of her heart-history.

The story of Lady Amy—reckless,

passionate pleasure-loving Lady Amy, might be only just begun; but the history of her *heart* was done when she should be nothing to Camille Langdon, and Langdon nothing to her.

She walked out and posted the letter herself—went down Hill Street, past Hellmuth Lodge, as she went every day—frequently twice a day, sometimes alone, but oftener accompanied by people in *dégagé* yachting costume, and the *dégagé* manner they seemed to assume with it. They would all go along the streets with the air of people bent on a frolic; with light hearts and feather brains.

The evening of that day was the evening of the concert that was to have the assistance of a song by Lady Amy.

Angry and miserable as she felt, distraction and amusement were so

much essentials of her existence, that she could not relinquish them, even though her heart felt too heavy for merry-making.

She dressed as becomingly as she could, choosing a black gown with long wreaths of natural passion-flowers; and as the time drew near for her to go, seated herself at the piano, and tried over in a clear and ringing voice the song she was to sing.

Suddenly she started up, and choosing another song from among her music; sang it with tears in her voice and in her eyes.

When her mother called for her, it was this song that she took with her.

"Mother," said she at once, "it is done at last. I have written to Mr. Snaith, and the letter is gone. After Mr. Conrady's account of him at Trouville

there was but one step for a woman of spirit to take."

"It has come at last then," murmured Lady Rosehew. "I was wrong—I was too sanguine. When all was over; when you had in spite of my opposition married him—when at the wedding-breakfast I looked at his handsome face and figure, listened to his mellow voice and clever speeches, I thought——"

"Don't," said Lady Amy in a trembling tone, "you torture me!"

"You use that word when your shoes pinch you, or you have a headache. Let me go on. I thought you would be happy with him. That the——"

"Mother, stop! I tell you that I cannot bear to hear you speak of him. If you persist in going on, I shall break down and cannot appear. I have but one thing to say of him—he has deserted me."

"Did he run off from Paris and come to London? I was under the impression that it was my own daughter who did so."

"Bah!" cried Lady Amy impatiently.

"Moreover," continued Lady Rosehew in her usual phlegmatic tone, "can it be said that a man has deserted his wife when he sends her money. I don't pretend to know much about such things as desertions and so on, but—"

"I hate the thought of his sending me money," interrupted Lady Amy, "besides, I don't know that he sends it. The decisive step is taken; it is much better for me to be free——"

"Free!" echoed her mother, "are you not free enough now, pray, Amy? You live alone; you follow your own course without let or hindrance from one living soul; you submerge yourself in debt as

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seems good to you, you dress in what fantastic way you please. What further freedom do you desire? Do you wish to marry again?"

After a moment's silence her daughter answered,

"Wish to marry again? I loathe the thought of marrying again. Yet I dare say I shall do it—do it as servants say 'to better myself.'"

"Dreadful!" said Lady Rosehew unfeignedly shocked. "I thought you had a heart, and proper feeling about certain things. In fact, I thought you would prefer *death* to such a position as this."

"I am reckless. I don't care what becomes of me."

"Amy write to your husband!"

"I will not. What? disturb him at his gaieties in Trouville with his gipsy

friends by sending him a wife's letter? No!"

Lady Rosehew wondered whether another letter from herself to the recreant husband would be of any avail. Then thinking of her former failure, gave her head a despondent shake and sighed.

They now reached the door of the theatre where the concert was held. Lady Rosehew took her place in the stalls; her daughter as one of the performers went behind the scenes.

The theatre was crowded. On one side of Lady Rosehew was Mr. Blagrove, who had ventured so far out of his shell as to come; on the other were Mr. and Mrs. Mountjoy, a son from college, and Miss Glyn.

When a tall man limping a little, and with a long grey beard, iron grey hair, and a green shade over his eyes entered,

and took a place very close to the stage, but under the shadow of the balcony, several people remarked to each other in a more or less exclamatory fashion, that "there was the mysterious Mr. Chilian Grey."

"I think it is explained now why he drives at night," remarked Mrs. Mountjoy to Lady Rosehew, "he has weak eyes."

"Yes, very likely," answered Lady Rosehew indifferently, and carelessly glancing at him, as he sat there with bowed head, in the shadow.

The concert began. The various performers sang jovially or melancholily, as their style happened to be; or translated inspired melody into mediocre "playing."

One young lady who was celebrated for being able to attain the upper F, reached it with some difficulty, and retired amidst

great applause; was encored, returned, sang another song with the note in it, which she rendered in a thin, shrill, inhuman sounding scream; more like a whistle, than a vocal sound. After her came Lady Amy; who floated forward in her dark dress starred with passion flowers. Lady Amy,

“ Whom youth made so fair,  
And passion so pale.”

The heavy mouth of Patrick] Conrady, who was seated close in front of the stage, fell open as he stared up at her with his dull obstinate eyes; his large hands involuntarily met together in a movement of applause; into his mind came that delicious union “Mr. and Lady Amy Conrady.” When should he have the felicity of owning visiting cards thus engraved? He had quite determined to

have a magnificent steam yacht named the Lady Amy—after his wife. His eldest son—Mr. Conrady's imagination, which never before had revelled in any anticipation beyond his dinner or the turn of certain bets, grasped now, with strong projective power, the pleasant uncertainties connected with that bright-haired girl above him. His eldest son should be named Amyas Bellamy Conrady—gorgeous !

Listen, Mr. Conrady, to the song she sings ; listen to the words, mark the voice that trembles with feeling, that melts into the air like the heavy scent of a white flower, and curb that over-sanguine fancy of yours :

“ We shall meet no more—no more  
In all the pleasant places of the earth ;  
And yet thy seal is on me, and thy feet  
Shall hardly keep from following after mine.

" We shall meet no more—no more !  
But in the silent watches of the night,  
Thy heart shall hear the calling of my heart,  
And in my sleep my face shall be toward thee.

" We shall meet no more—no more,  
And I shall only speak thy name to God ;  
But in my memory thy face shall wax  
More beautiful, and dearer year by year.

" We shall meet no more—no more,  
Till some glad day I fall upon thy neck—  
The world being past—and tell thee without tears  
How life was but a longing after thee."

For a moment after the intense young voice ceased there was silence ; more than one person felt a cord around the throat, a swelling of the heart—then applause burst forth, and it was long and loud. There was a vociferous encore but Lady Amy did not respond ; clamorous though the recall became.

Having waited until all chance of her return was over. Mr. Chilian Grey rose,

and limped out; his lips were as grey as his beard.

No one who saw Lady Amy a little later on, at the Mountjoys' hilarious supper-party, could have believed that she had capacities for rendering a song of sorrow, sorrowfully; and so said Mr. Blgrave to Miss Glyn, as he watched her. She was all excitement, gaiety, merriment; her spirits seemed as effervescent as the champagne she sipped.

Georgie regarded her with a tender interest.

"She is so kind; so dear and charming," said she in a moved voice, "she is so kind to me; and I do love kindness."

"And of course you get as much as you can possibly want?" said Blgrave, giving her one of his long, searching looks.

"Do I?" answered she with a sad

smile. "This is a great piece of kindness on their parts," continued she simply. "I've never had such a treat before—the concert, and to be at the supper afterwards. I, the governess."

"But you are a daughter of one of Mr. Mountjoy's old friends," said Blgrave, feeling unaccountably angry with the Mountjoys.

"Yes, I know; and the Mountjoys have been very kind. They could easily get a much better governess than I am, but they have me because they are—kind. I must repeat the same old word again."

Blgrave, for the hundredth or thousandth time, wondered at the freakishness of fortune, which places vulgarity where it can shine unshaded by insignificance of surroundings, while it makes refinement cower unseen under the miserable shade of poverty.



His eyes turned from employed to employers; from Miss Glyn, composed, gentle, graceful, to Gertrude with her *voyante* dress and appearance, her bold looks and gushing ways. To Mrs. Mountjoy, flaring in crimson silk, and crimson face, and blatant self-assertion; to Mr. Mountjoy, whose thoughts and ideas were so hard and narrow, that it seemed as if they must crush his soul like a vice. His glance then rested with even stronger disapproval on young Claude Mountjoy, who had approached them and was leaning over Miss Glyn, with a detestable mixture of familiarity, patronage, and admiration.

"It is stifling here," said he. "Don't you find it so? Will you come out on the balcony? Come!"

Georgie rose, and feeling very uncertain how this move of her's would

be viewed by Mrs. Mountjoy, made her way out to the balcony (so powerful an agent is inclination even with the most dutiful of us) followed by George Blagrave.

"Rather a cub, don't you think so?" said he, as they seated themselves.

"Young Mr. Mountjoy?"

"Yes. But perhaps he is *kind* to you—and you *love* kindness, you say!"

Georgie, a little hurt by his savage tone, made no reply. They both sat silent; then a deep long breath, that he could not prevent sounding like a sigh, softened her mood towards him.

"I will not offer a penny for your thoughts," said she with a slight laugh, "a penny is not valuable enough for any one's thoughts—even though it has a Queen's head upon it."

"Why did you not leave out that 'for any one's thoughts?' I should have liked your speech very much then. Though I daresay it is a matter of indifference to you whether I like your speeches or not?"

"No, nothing of that sort is a matter of indifference to me. But do you know, I think I must go in; I am afraid Mrs. Mountjoy will not like my being out here." She rose.

"Don't go in."

But as he spoke, she had gone, and there was nothing for him to do but to follow her.

They found, on their return to the drawing-room, that two of the guests, M. and Mme. de Thomé were taking their leave. Mme de Thomé was a tall, slim, fashion plate of a woman, with a clever, fascinating face; she always wore a long

curling love-lock hanging down her back. The love-lock was sprinkled with grey hairs (why does not Time spare us ?) tied with a bright ribbon that matched her dress. To-night she was dressed in a gown the colour of moonlight upon snow ; the bow on her hair corresponding. She was a strange combination of frivolity, and strong good sense.

She carried about with her, wherever she went, a lay figure of her own dimensions, upon which all her toilettes were tried before she hazarded wearing them herself ; yet if a man of parts asked her views on some knotty question, he found that they were neither sketchy, feeble, nor feminine—but well defined, vigorous and masculine. Being pleased with Blgrave's appearance, she had tried a little to talk to him at supper, hearing that the work of both pen and pencil

had been favourably received by the mediocrity-scouting world (a small world indeed) of cognoscenti; but she had not been able to make him say anything but what was common place and brief enough to have proceeded from the lips of Mr. Mountjoy.

She had commented upon this with some surprise and disappointment to Miss Mountjoy; and when the De Thomé, Blagrove, and most of the other guests had gone, leaving only Lady Rosehew, her daughter and two or three more, Gertrude took occasion to remark, with an air of profound conviction, that she "did not believe in these clever people; they were always horribly dull, and silent. Look at this Mr. Blagrove," (Gertrude was very lavish in her use of demonstrative pronouns) "why even Mme. de Thomé could make nothing of him, for

she told me so. He answered her almost in—what do you call them—monosyllables.”

Lady Rosehew, Lady Amy and the rest not having the critical faculty in its larger sense, could find no solution to the puzzle of a psychological poet and mystic painter of four and twenty talking common-places to women.

At last a man who had been ruminating silently, spoke up, saying.

“Well, remember the kind of things he writes; queer kind of things that you have to read over twice before you understand their drift. I believe the fact is that his mind is full of abstract thoughts, which he cannot give expression to in ordinary conversation, anymore than he could propound a problem in algebra. Like Godwin, you know, who with all his power of dealing with

tremendous subjects, only talked of trivial matters, usually."

One or two people, as a response to this, said Oh! one or two more looked hard at Miss Glyn; perhaps she could make a revelation of tremendous somethings said to her out on the balcony. Miss Glyn's little gentle face remained quite unmoved.

"He is very agreeable to look at, however," said Lady Rosehew, as she took her leave, "even if he does not talk surprisingly, as he is bound to do. A pity he is so delicate. Good night."

The mother and daughter went away together. They drove down the Mountjoy's long shadowy avenue in silence. It was a dark still night, full of deep odours of flowers, and sea, and leaf. As they went under the lamp of the gateway, and turned into the long, silent

tree-lined road, there came faintly sighing in at the window of their brougham, a sorrowfully articulated sound, that was half the word '*Amy*,' half a low cry, or sigh of pain.

"What was that!" exclaimed Lady Rosehew.

"It must have been the wind," said Lady Amy, pale and startled.

"The wind is not in the *habit* of saying your name," replied Lady Rosehew with her usual composure. "It may just have found out what it is however. Why do you tremble?"

"I don't know," faltered her daughter. "It must have been only our own fancy, that made it sound like Amy."

"Only our fancy," rejoined Lady Rosehew. "Why I have heard people say they heard words in the ticking of a clock."



But Lady Amy still trembled.

When they reached her little gate, she turned to her mother, saying imploringly.

"Mamma, I feel so nervous! I wish you would come in, and stay the night with me. The room next mine is a nice room; all ready, and I could——"

"Let Burrard sleep there then," replied Lady Rosehew, not without secret triumph. "She will be a much better protector than I am. She is five feet seven or eight I should think, and I am five foot nothing,"

"It is not the *size*," said Lady Amy half crying. "I am sure she would lose her presence of mind at the least thing, and you are always so cool, so composed——"

"No, really, Amy, Burrard will take care of you quite as well as I can do.

Good night my dear. See, she is holding the door open."


But Lady Amy, who *felt* her mother's unspoken thoughts at this moment, rushed into the house in silent rage. Lady Rosehew drove away, smiling to herself.





## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TEN BOXES.

“ YOUNG girl in your position cannot be too careful. And as it has pleased Providence to give you a place in life where you can't have the amusements, and so on, that other girls have, it is better to make no attempt at behaviour not suited to your position.”

Mrs. Mountjoy was the speaker of this

admonition, with 'position' at its two ends; Miss Glyn was the person addressed.

Poor little Georgie Glyn, a little shabby black figure with a dog's-eared lesson book in her hand, standing "at the receipt" of blame before the gorgeous Mrs. Mountjoy, with a lap full of tawdry wool-work; and Gertrude, lolling on the sofa reading a novel backwards, as she always did; beginning at the third volume to see how it ended, then skimming through the other two.

The freshness of morning was wafted through the open window, crisp with its passage over the cold blue water; the stars of the jessamine dotted a background of glossy green leaves, the faintest suspicion of Mr. Claude's cigar smoke mingled with their fragrance.

"What have I done that you don't like,

Mrs. Mountjoy?" asked Georgie in a low tone.

"To tell you the truth—several things. I did not quite like your going out on the balcony last evening with Mr. Blagrove, and I don't *at all* like his meeting you on the sands. I will not speak severely to you, because your being the daughter of an old friend of Mr. Mountjoy's puts you on a different footing from an ordinary governess—still I wish you to remember that you *are* only a governess, and not forget my wishes."

"I never forget for a moment that I am only a governess," said Georgie, in the same low, gentle tone. "I am sorry that I should have done anything to cause you to speak to me so; but in future I will try and give no occasion for you to find fault with me."

She turned to leave the room, but at

this moment, as ill-luck would have it, Claude, Mrs. Mountjoy's first born and best beloved, entered by the open window, and saw fit to make Miss Glyn the recipient and victim of a glance of great ocular emphasis—not to be mistaken for anything but the last stage of admiration.

Mrs. Mountjoy detected it, and an agony of apprehensive rage swelled her bosom.

Miss Glyn, looking straight in front of her, with her usual calm simplicity left the room; trembling at the possible consequence which that stupidly unguarded look might bring on her, yet with a slight, irrepressible feeling of amusement struggling through her annoyance, vexation, and foreboding.

"*Claude!*" said Mrs. Mountjoy in an awful voice as the door closed. "What

sort of way is *that* to look at a young person like Geor—Miss Glyn !”

Poor Mrs. Mountjoy ! she found it very hard to compass any manner but an *ex-officio* one, much as she wished so to do.

“ The right sort of way,” returned Claude, who was a fresh-coloured youth, ridiculously like his sister Gertrude. “ She’s a nice little thing—Georgie. We’re all to call her Georgie, I suppose !”

“ Certainly *you* are not to call her Georgie. I regret that, in the tenderness of my heart, when she first came to us, I allowed any informality of the sort. I am distressed, Claude, at your looks and manner in regard to her.”

“ Why, what on earth have I said and done ?” assuming a large air of amazement.

“ You don’t mean to say, mamma, that

he was making eyes at her?" Here put in Gertrude, rousing herself.

"He was looking at her in a way he ought to have been ashamed of himself for doing," said Mrs. Mountjoy. "You don't wish to make her lose her place with us, do you, Claude?"

"No," with undoubted truthfulness. "Come, let us change the subject. It is your birth-day, eh, Gertrude?"

"Yes—don't offer to give me twenty-two kisses."

"I should be more likely to offer to give you twenty-two whacks. Want a box of sugar-plums? I haven't any ingenuity in selecting presents; that is the only thing I can think of."

"I've had three already," replied Gertrude, with languid pride and pleasure; "but you may give me one if



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you like—let the box be a handsome one, with a lock and key.”

“What a cool animal you are,” was the brother’s remark as he lounged out of the room.

Georgie, that afternoon on the sands, watched Blagrove coming slowly towards her, with mingled sensations of pleasure, vexation, and discontent.

Pleasure that he cared to seek her; vexation, because his presence was a forbidden thing, and she must in some way make him understand that he was to leave her; discontent with a position like hers, which entailed such a sad surrender of nearly all the joys of youth.

He came to her side. Greeting her with the indescribable air of hesitating yet eager satisfaction that is so significant.

As usual, Lily was beside her, the three boys grubbing on the sand at some distance off.

She allowed him to talk to her for a few minutes without interruption. Let him tell her that he liked her in "that hat;" and that she ought not to sit at work without gloves, for it would tan her hands. (Dear little white hands they were.)

"It doesn't in the least matter if my hands are tanned or not;" then frowning a little from sheer discomfort, blushing, faltering, she said, "Mr. Blaggrave—" and paused, "how uncomfortable it makes me to say it. You must not come and talk to me when I am here with the children—Mrs. Mountjoy says you must not."

"Then when *am* I to talk to you?"

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asked he in a strangely earnest voice.

"Oh! Not at all. Mrs. Mountjoy does not like it. She does not think it *appropriate* for a governess. *Appropriate* is not quite the word I want, but I am sure you understand—"

"And do *you* not like it, nor think it *appropriate*?"

"Ah, that's quite away from the point—what *I* think," with a slight, yet fascinating smile.

"Is it? Yet I particularly wish for your answer."

"Well, then, honestly, I rather like to have you talk to me."

"*Rather* like it," repeated he, not in a vexed tone, but in one of resignation. "I do not *rather like* talking to you. I——Do you know there is something about you which gives impulsion to the best wheels of my mind—"

Georgie interrupted him by clapping her hands with an air of childish pleasure.

"At last," cried she, "you have said something like what they expect you to say."

"Who expect me to say?" asked he, looking at her in surprise—and something more.

"Why, the other night after you were gone—but perhaps I ought not to tell you."

"Yes, you ought."

"They were all remarking in surprise that you talked like any other ordinary man who is not clever, and a poet."

"Did they expect me to talk in rhymes?"

"I think they expected you to say somewhat such things as you said just now. To talk about *mind*, and their souls

and to make them plunge into deep waters of thought with you."

"What—and *drown* them?"

"Ah, you are sarcastic now; and so now is a good time for you to leave me. Will you please go?"

"Do you mean it? Do you wish me to go?"

"I do," she answered earnestly. "Unless you go, you will make me untrue to my word."

"What a world it is, of love to the unlovable, kisses to the unkissable, wealth to the niggard, poverty to the generous," said he, half to himself.

"You do not look as if you could be untrue either to yourself or anyone else," he added, in the severely simple manner that was one of his distinctive traits.

"There is nothing true but dogs and Heaven," said Georgie softly, and looking down to avoid his searching gaze.

"Do you mean to say that you don't trust anyone? That speech sounds as if you did not."

"I ought to have said there is nothing quite absolutely true but Heaven," replied Georgie, amending her speech. "And now be good enough—be *kind* enough to go!" she accompanied the words by an imploring glance at him.

Did he remember her saying that she loved kindness?

Whether he did or not, he said,

"At least let me take the little one, and 'soothe my soul' with the 'Lydian measure' of her innocent voice." His words sounded idiotic to himself, or at least insufferably silly; but to Georgie, who thought speeches of this kind in keeping with a poet and a dreamer, they sounded graceful and happy. "Let me have Lily to run a race with," added he,

in his customary prosaic way, "Mrs. Mountjoy would not object to that, would she?"

"No," answered Georgie, unhesitatingly; "I think she would be very glad of anything that would make Lily run and play like other children. Go, little Lil; Mr. Blagrave will not tease you, or be rough with you as the boys are."

Blagrave, with a smile, extended his hand. The child, rising, took it. They ran off together over the sparkling sand.

Georgie's needle flew fast; her mood was made up of unshed tears and unexpressed smiles.

Blagrave found that his fragile little playfellow was not good for much racing. Presently she drew him towards some rocks in the shade, and seated herself beside him.

"Gertrude has a birthday to-day,"

began she with the Quaker simplicity of childhood. "She is *old*."

"Oh, no," began Blgrave.

"But she is," insisted the child; "because she says so herself; and she ought to know, oughtn't she?"

"Well—perhaps."

"She had three sugar-plum boxes full of sugar-plums—and perhaps Claude is going to give her another."

"Very nice to have a birthday, upon my word," said Blgrave, looking out of the corner of his eye towards that small black figure, with its white and busy fingers; "don't you think so?"

"Yes, when it's like *mine* and Gertrude's; but not when it's like poor Miss Glyn's. Hers is to-morrow; she told me so. Nobody else knows it but her and me—and now you. She won't have any sweeties; she said so."



"How does she know that she won't?"

Lily shook her head.

"See here, little Lil, don't tell that you have told me her birthday is to-morrow?"

"Well, I won't."

"Promise."

"I promise. Come, let us go back to her; it's nicer where she is."

"I agree with you. It is much nicer where she is; the nicest place in the world, in fact."

He left his little companion with her governess, and walked away, saying nothing to her but a "good-bye." He went off the sands, and up the principal street of Wrode, which boasted several good confectioners' shops.

Entering one of these shops, he bought ten of the handsomest bon-bon boxes the place contained, and ordered them to be sent to him.

The next morning he despatched the ten boxes, by ten different messengers, at ten various times. They all bore one address,

*Miss Glyn,*

*Mount Pleasant.*

That afternoon he took the walk on the sands that he had lately taken with unvarying regularity, and at the same hour ; between five and six.

Miss Glyn—part of whose routine it was to bring the children here to play—was seated in the usual place ; Lily, by way of a change, was digging an exceedingly shallow hole with an exceedingly small wooden spade, a few yards away from her.

Blagrove knew instinctively that Miss Glyn would thank him not to speak to her ; therefore, he contented himself with entering into conversation with Lily,

having first drawn her out of hearing of her governess.

“What *do* you think?” said the child, eager to impart her news, “Miss Glyn had a nicer birthday than Gertrude. What do you think—she had *eleven* boxes of sweeties!”

“No; *ten*,” said Blagrove, in a tone of calm correction.

“*Eleven*,” repeated the child positively. “She had e—lev—in. I counted them. We all did. *Eleven*.”

“*Eleven*?” echoed Blagrove, looking at Lily with a frown, while a dark flush rose to his face. “*Eleven*!”

His looks and tone so frightened the child, that bursting into tears, she broke away from him, and ran towards Miss Glyn, sobbing. “He won’t believe you had eleven boxes to-day; he won’t believe it!”

This being sufficient verification, Blagrove in a rage strode away without giving himself time to observe how pale and woe-begone the little governess's face was, and how red and swollen her eyes were, as if with weeping.

He did not know that those gay-coloured boxes had been the poor child's undoing, that they had cost her her home.

Mrs. Mountjoy having ingeniously caused her son Claude to commit himself as to the sending of one, at least, of the fatal boxes, became possessed with the certainty that in Miss Glyn she harboured a minx, a viper, a sly little cat, whose deeds were too deceitful and underhand to entitle her to a home in her house.

With her ample self tightly imprisoned in glove-fitting garments that hampered

her movements; a little fish-tail-like queue only being left free to waggle behind her as she walked, she entered the school-room, looking like a fat mermaid, and having ominously sent the children away, she began,

"Miss Glyn, may I ask what friends you have to send you *anonymously* eleven expensive boxes of bon-bons. *Eleven!*"

Mrs. Mountjoy pronounced the word eleven as if it were a guilty, blood-stained word.

"I do not know who sent them," answered Georgie looking at her with clear, truthful eyes. "I do not in the least know who sent them."

"Miss Glyn, you place me in the unpleasant position of having to say that I doubt you."

"*Doubt me*, Mrs Mountjoy? doubt my word!" cried Georgie, fire leaping into

her eyes, and colour to her cheeks. "Dear Mrs. Mountjoy, don't be so cruel as to really say you doubt me, that you do not believe me; you have never found me anything but truthful; never *will* find me anything but truthful, for I would not say what was not true for the world! oh say that you *believe* me, not that you doubt me."

Acted on, in spite of herself, by the piteous voice, Mrs. Mountjoy qualified what she had said. -

"Very well; I will allow myself to believe that you do not positively know who sent them; that you only *suspect*."

"I do not, I do not!" began Georgie eagerly; but Mrs. Mountjoy imposed silence by a wave of her hand, and continued.

"Putting that aside, the fact remains that you have had eleven boxes of bon-

bons sent to you. Now I ask you, Miss Glyn, are ladies in the habit of sending their friends or acquaintances boxes of bon-bons? *No*. Then the conclusion is, that gentlemen must have sent them to you. Eleven different gentlemen!"

"Oh, Mrs. Mountjoy," cried Georgie half laughing, half crying. "I have not eleven gentlemen acquaintances in the whole world."

Mrs. Mountjoy shook her head with ill-boding solemnity. "I could have overlooked much, but not this," she said. "I cannot convince myself that I ought not to find another place for you. In the house of some one of the middle class; where you will not be exposed to the tempting sight of high social doings;" (Mr. Mountjoy's grandfather had been a razor-maker) "where you will not be obliged to witness the admiration given to a young lady like

Gertrude, which evidently has been too tempting for you to resist imitating."

"For me to resist imitating?" repeated Georgie, her face freezing into the calm of mortally wounded pride. "What have I not been able to resist imitating? Miss Mountjoy—or the people who admire her?"

"You understand perfectly well what I mean," rejoined Mrs. Mountjoy, angrier far now than she had been before, because she was aware of having expressed herself lamely, and of having Miss Glyn "take her up" for it. "You understand perfectly well, Miss Glyn, what I mean. Why ask trifling questions when your whole future is at stake?"

"I have done nothing to entitle you to send me away," said Georgie quietly, but with a terrified and bleeding heart. "But you need say no more. I am going."



I will try for another place as quickly as I can. Middle-class, or working-class, or *haute-volée*, it is all the same to me. *My* class remains the same."

"I shall make every exertion to find you a good and suitable home, and I hope you will cease encouraging the attentions of gentlemen; for you may be sure, Miss Glyn, they will end only in—bon-bon boxes."

Georgie was too sick at heart to refute this last fling. She said in a low tone however, a low and crushed tone.

"Please do not insult me any more, Mrs. Mountjoy. Shall I go on with the children's lessons? or may I go to my own room and begin to pack my box?"

"Continue the children's lessons by all means; there is no hurry for you to pack your boxes. You shall stay here of

course, until a perfectly satisfactory place is found for you."

"Shall I?" murmured Georgie under her breath. "I am not sure about that."

Mrs. Mountjoy waddled out of the school-room, with short hampered steps that might have been five inches long.

Georgie went through the day's routine as usual.

It was only when the children were in bed; when night was falling, and day and its duties over at last, that the restraint she had imposed on herself failed her, and in her small scantily-furnished room she gave way, breaking into a wild fit of tears.

She was a lonely little creature; a poor desolate child with no one on earth to turn to. The reflection that there were numbers of other young things in a like position to her own, brought to her now

none of the comfort it sometimes did. It only made her spend additional sorrow on their hard case, which she included with her own.

The Mountjoys were having a large dinner-party. Through the open door and windows of the dining-room floated the hum of voices, the trill of treble laughs, or the deeper note of bass ones. Savoury odours, mingling with the pure air, were wafted up the stairs by the draughts stirring all through the house, and reaching her, sickened her; for the very suggestion of food was disagreeable to her, so utterly wretched was she.

At length a longing to escape from the festal sounds and scents that jarred on her sickened senses, overpowered her. Taking up a hat that lay near her, she glided out of the room, down the stairs, out of the house, finally out of the gate,

and into the road which was free to all, and not tainted with being possessed by the Mountjoys.

It was a quiet, eminently respectable road; lined on each side by private places like Mount Pleasant.

Poor Georgie strayed along it like a lost, bewildered lamb. The idea of going to a strange house, among strange people, who would treat her with that dreadful coldness of the employer towards the employed, was misery to her; but not so miserable as to stay here, where she had been distrusted, wounded, outraged—she, so innocent.

She intended to walk only from the front gate by which she had emerged, to the back gate; there to enter, and return through the grounds to the house. As she walked along under the hedge, she heard with tolerable distinctness a voice

singing in the Mountjoy's drawing-room, whose windows were all wide open, and was even able to recognize it as Lady Amy's silvery soprano.

She started violently as she came suddenly on a vehicle drawn up close to the hedge. Unfortunately, she gave more alarm than she was given, and to something more dangerous than human intelligence. The two ponies in the trap, startled by her sudden appearance in her black and white print gown, which now loomed out purely white, shied violently; then started madly forward, their driver, taken unawares, being quite unable to curb them.

Georgie, bewildered with fright, did not know how to escape, nor which way to turn; she rushed impulsively away from them as she supposed, quite to the other side of the road. If she had re-

mained on the same side where she was, and shrunk under the hedge, she would have been safe—as it was, she paid the penalty of pitiable feminine want of nerve, and actually placed herself in their path ; their impetuous hoofs struck her down. An anguish of terror and pain settled on her ; and she knew no more.





## CHAPTER XII.

### SEVEN TOWERS.



R. PATRICK CONRADY had effected the purchase of "Seven Towers;" a place which went for a seemingly small sum:—accounted for by the fact of its having an enormous ground-rent attached to it.

Mr. Conrady mentioning to the uninitiated the sum he had given, and with-holding any allusion to the ground-

rent, was congratulated warmly on his bargain.

"You are always such a lucky fellow," several people said to him; and he did not deny the impeachment.

He liked to be thought fortunate, prosperous, enviable; a specimen of smooth-sailing.

Now began the pleasantly momentous task of furnishing the house.

"Won't you let me have the benefit of your good taste, and give me some suggestions?" asked he, in an obsequious, yet self-conscious manner, of Lady Amy.

She shook her head in refusal.

"Don't ask me," she said, "I should be sure to make you regret it by some outrageous choice of colour or effect; ask Miss Mountjoy; she will be a much better person to consult than I am."

"But it is your taste, your selection I



want," said Conrady eagerly, "not hers."

"Why pray do you want mine?" asked Amy, with pretended innocence, and looking up at him with big childish eyes, devoid of all tender sentiment as far as he was concerned.

"You know why," muttered he in a thick voice.

She turned hastily away from him, vowing to herself that she would remain firm in her refusal to offer suggestions or preferences as to colour and design.

Accordingly Mr. Conrady furnished his house as he imagined the little lady, whose divorce was pending, would like it, and combating a somewhat persistent refusal on her part to go and see the finished effect, bore her off, together with Lady Rosehew and Miss Mountjoy, one golden hazy afternoon, in his wagonette.

As they drove through the great gates

with their bronze and gilt scroll-work, and entered an avenue lined on each side with feathery-foliaged larches, and sloping gently upward to the door with its deep porch and low large step, Lady Amy, who was impulsive always, uttered a little exclamation of admiration. The house was very large; its outline cut the blue of the sky with quaint, graceful, wholly irregular lines. It was garlanded with ivy, and with rare climbing plants; its windows were fanciful in shape, and several were of stained glass. In truth, its whole appearance invited the imagination to dwell with delight on what would be found within its walls.

They entered, with words of admiration and pleasure on their lips that died away as room the first was disclosed; a library, to the right of the door, immediately on entering. A crimson desert.

"Lovely!" cried Gertrude, with loud enthusiasm.

"Very,—" (the "very" followed by an unintelligible murmur) from Lady Rosehew.

Her daughter neither spoke or murmured, but remained perfectly dumb.

They then proceeded to the drawing-room.

"Oh!" then breathed Lady Amy in irrepressible horror. "Is it veneered with slices of plum-pudding—or what?"

"What did you say?" inquired Conrady, eagerly.

"I merely asked whether the walls were veneered; or is it a strikingly peculiar wall-paper?"

"Unique!" exclaimed Gertrude, the enthusiast, gazing rapturously at the smudgy black, fawn-colour and brown stripes of the paper. "And the carpet!"

what a lovely emerald green ! and the roses on it are so real you could pluck them."

"No, you couldn't," answered the courtly Conrady, "because they ain't roses. They're rosettes. My upholsterer feller told me that flowers were used up. Designs are the last thing; arabesques, that kind of thing you know, and these," directing a square forefinger at the pink rosettes.

Lady Amy shuddered as she looked about her. Such costly ugliness, such graceless splendour, such eye-torturing combinations of colour she had never imagined. The only things the room suggested, were heavy plum-cake, indigestible Christmas pudding; arsenical sweets, and gilt gingerbread.

From the drawing-room they passed on to other rooms which afforded no relief to the eye, or taste.

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The bed-rooms were all duly dubbed; rose-bud-room, fern-room, lily-room, forget-me-not-room, &c. and were more endurable than the reception rooms.

Worst of all, was a small apartment that Mr. Conrady was sheepish, and clumsily embarrassed about. It was papered, ceiling and all, with a gaudy Japanese paper, whose stripes converged in the middle of the ceiling in such a way as to give the idea of a pagoda. At the point of meeting, there was a gold knob. The panels of the door were painted pale pink and green. The furniture was covered with superb damask, in colour uncompromising vermilion; there were a great many mirrors in broad gold frames, there were gilt jardinières, and brackets and footstools.

“ I think I remember hearing you say you liked a room as bright as a bird cage,”

said the infatuated Conrady *sotto voce* to Lady Amy.

“Preserve me from being the bird in *this* bird.cage !” said she to herself. Then aloud, and laughing,

“Why have you not a joss or two, and a few chop-sticks—gilt ?”

“Why, do you think it looks Chinese ?”

“Decidedly Chinese. But that is what is meant, is it not ?”

“Well, I don’t know ; perhaps it is,” answered he doubtfully.

Leaving the house by way of a brilliantly filled conservatory, they strolled out into the grounds that sloped towards the cobalt-blue water.

Gertrude, baffled by a pertinacity stronger than her own, was forced to fall behind with Lady Rosehew, and watch Mr. Conrady walking as close beside Lady Amy as he could, while his head was bent

that his gaze at her might be direct, and as level as is feasible when six foot tries to look straight into the eyes of five foot three.

With some ingenuity, Mr. Conrady managed to elude the other two, and left them gazing through the wires of an enormous aviary, at the saffron-coloured finches, the weyдах birds, Java sparrows.

He led his companion into a huge grotto-like fernery, where through wire columns and arches, filled with moss and earth, airy fronds and delicate moss bells, and weird fragile shapes of orchids thrust themselves, and where great tree-ferns from Tasmania stood embracing the damp mild air with arms of ethereal green; here whistled no bullfinches, nor piped any canaries; it was cool, still, dim with faint green light, and deep green shadow.

Huge elms outside sheltered the walls of glass, and their full-foliaged branches almost met over the glazed dome-shaped roof.

He begged her to rest on a rustic seat pavilioned with airy and bell-like forms, scentless, yet redolent of fantastic beauty, and delicate grace, for they were the rarest of orchids; and Lady Amy being tired, sank against the dark, writhed branches which formed the back of the seat.

"It's—gorgeous to see you out here at my place among my things," said Conrady, in what for him was a rhapsodical manner. (He had been going to say "awfully jolly" then substituted the word gorgeous).

"Do you mean that your things improve my appearance, or what?" asked she with a slight backward movement of her haughty little head.



"No, no, of course I don't mean that—you have a way of making a fellow feel awfully abashed. I mean—only I'm not good at expressing myself—that it is aw—delicious to see you surrounded by things that are mine *now*, but that it is the longing of my soul to share with you."

"You are very kind, but——"

"Lady Amy—Amy!" cried Conrady, his dark face working with emotion, "is there a chance for me to have the happiness of sharing them with you? Of"——

"Stop!" cried she imperiously. "You must not talk to me in this way."

"Because it is not settled yet, do you mean?" asked he, in his agitation prodding with his stick at a rare specimen of *Dicksonia* something or other, and ruining it. "But when it is settled—and from what I hear it is sure to be in your favour"——

"In my favour !" murmured Lady Amy in accents of misery.

"*Then*, Lady Amy, will you let me say to you all that I have been keeping back within myself, until I have felt a sort of madness raging in me that all but compelled me to throw myself down at your feet, and speak before I had a right. Soon, *soon* !" added he with a clumsy, wild gesture indicative alike of his awkwardness and his passion, "I, or any man will have a right to speak to you as if you had never been mar"—

"You have said enough and *more* than enough," cried Lady Amy starting to her feet. "More than I have wished to listen to. Come, let us find the others ! Your fernery is very fine, Mr. Conrady ; and I wish that while we were in it, we had confined ourselves to speaking of its beauties."

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"I don't," replied he in a low tone, in which was yet discoverable a new accent of confidence and triumph. "I feel happier than I have done for many a long day."

"Will it take away that quite irritating smile and look of yours, if I tell you that you are speaking to the most miserable person in existence?" said Lady Amy, drawing back from him with marked displeasure; for with a smile of gratified vanity, and look of ungratified passion, he had approached her very closely—so closely that he almost touched her.


"But you will not always be miserable?" said he, not stepping back himself, but allowing the distance between them to be widened by her only.

She made no reply to him, and going quickly past him quitted the fernery, leaving him to follow.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### SEPARATED FROM SOLITUDE.

HEN Georgie regained her consciousness, she found herself lying on a sofa in an unfamiliar room, with an old man leaning over her whose face she did not know. Her thoughts being, for a second or two, like the broken reflections on troubled waters, she caught herself wondering whether this was one of the people who had sent her one of her unlucky bonbonnières.

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"Where am I?" asked she, raising herself on her elbow. "What has become of me—I mean what has happened to me—ah! I remember—I can hear the jingling of those ponies' bells in my ears still. Were they your ponies?"

"I am sorry to say they were," answered a deep sweet voice, which somehow did not seem to suit that venerable bearded countenance. "I am thankful to see you open your eyes, and come to yourself. I have been in horrid suspense for the last fifteen minutes."

"Is it really only fifteen minutes ago since it happened?" asked Georgie, in amazement.

"It is only that since I brought you here. I did not know where you belonged; I did not where your home was, and so I brought you here—it seemed the best thing to do."

"I think it was," answered Georgie, sinking back on her cushions with a weary sigh, "for I have no home; and it is too dreadful to think of having been carried in. They were going to get up a little dance. How angry they would have been with me."

"They must be cruel and unreasonable people then, whoever they are," returned Georgie's unknown companion. "But tell me if you are in pain anywhere. Move your limbs, that I may see they are all right."

Georgie obediently did as she was told. Evidently bones, joints, and sinews were uninjured.

"You must have been only stunned; and of course, you are shaken—"

He moved quickly away, returning in a moment with a glass full of something, which he held to her lips, and which she

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drank with the same docility that she had shown before.

It was reviving; but alas! with strength and energy, it also revived full mental power to understand and appreciate her position.

"What shall I do—what shall I do?" moaned she, hiding her face in her hands. "What will they think of me—what will they say to me now. They will not believe me; I cannot make them believe me. They may even refuse to take me in. Oh, what would I give never to see them again? What would I give for some hole to creep away in—and die!" she ended under her breath.

Her companion looked at her with compassion. He had singularly brilliant fiery eyes to be set in a face wearing the livery of old age.

"Can I help you in any way?" asked

he. "Do not think me prying, but who will not believe you? If you choose, I will substantiate what you say to these Philistines, (they must be Philistines.) Unless——" he paused. Then, abruptly, "who are they?"

"The Mountjoys."

A change passed over the other's face.

"I cannot then," he muttered. "They would recognise me. But, again, is there no way in which I can assist you; if you do not wish to go back to these people whom you seem to dread (and no wonder,") *sotto voce*. "If you have friends elsewhere than in Wrode, I will see that you get to them safely. Pray let me make all the amends I can for my ill-luck—perhaps carelessness."

Georgie shook her head with calm mournfulness.

"I have no where to go." Then, look-



ing into his aged face, she added, as if stirred by some sudden impulse, "I have never begged for anything before—but I do now—I am made desperate by my helplessness and misery. Let me stay here for a day or two, until I find something to do—somewhere to go! You are old; old enough to be my grandfather; and you have generously offered to help me. You can help me, beyond any words of mine to express, by giving me the shelter of your roof for a day or two."

Her companion seemed much moved.

"My dear child," said he, "you must have a very trusting nature thus to commit yourself into the hands of a stranger."

"I do trust you," answered Georgie, shaken out of her reserve, her gentle pride, by the exigencies hedging her in. "If I go back to them, they will repeat

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the insults of the morning, and add others more intolerable; they might not even let me stay in their house a single hour; your coming and explaining would do no good. They would cry out at me, 'what were you doing in the road at ten o'clock at night!' and I could not convince them that I felt *stifled* in their house and in their grounds, all echoing as they were with gay voices, and merry laughs, that cut my poor aching heart; and that just to escape for a moment, I went out of one gate meaning to go in at the other. I do trust you," she continued, after a pause, wherein she had looked at him earnestly. "There is something about you that makes me trust you. Perhaps it is that long silvery beard. You make me think of a patriarch; of a Bible hero; no wonder I trust you, Mr. Chilian Grey—for I know that is your name."

The brilliant eyes of Mr. Chilian Grey grew clouded. Without making any rejoinder, he turned and abruptly quitted the room.

Wonderingly, Georgie's glance strayed about the room; which was arranged like that of a student and writer, with very little to redeem its almost comfortless simplicity.

Her heart beat fast; she felt roused, more than excited, and though her nerves had been so recently shaken, she was quite collected.

But why had Mr. Chilian Grey suddenly turned on his heel and vanished? Where had he gone? When would he return? For the first time a misgiving concerning him, entered her mind; but as she recalled his voice and face, it faded away.

Then the door opened—and a man,

beardless, young, and handsome, entered. A man who might have been Mr. Chilian Grey's grandson.

Georgie started up; her eyes widely opened; her lips parted and trembling.

The young man, who was as handsome as an Apollo, advanced, and resting his hand on the arm of the sofa, whereon she was, said with a mournful and bitter smile.

"Now that I have lost my patriarchal white hair and venerable beard, now that you cannot think that I am like a Bible hero, do you trust me enough to receive the shelter of my house?"

"It is all changed—I am frightened," said Georgie, breathlessly.

"I could not, would not deceive you. I had not the heart to let you stay with a man disguised into the semblance of one, as you said—old enough to be your

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grandfather. But I can only assure you that Mr. Chilian Grey, without his patriarchal hair and venerable beard, will be as true a protector to you, as with those trust-inspiring accessories."

"I am bewildered," said Georgie, interlacing her fingers nervously, "it makes me think of a fairy tale;—of Beauty and the Beast—of handsome young princes turned into old men by wicked fairies. Were you made old by a wicked fairy?" She laughed a little sobbing laugh, for the green chartreuse Chilian Grey had given her was potent to affect a young brain like hers.

"Yes," he answered with his bitter smile, "I was turned into an old man by a wicked fairy; but do not let us think of her—or of me. It is of you we must think. I live alone here with one servant; a good fellow—I little thought

that this room would ever hold one of your sex !”

“ I ought not to stay !” cried poor Georgie, with quivering lips. Then glancing at the clock. “ It is after midnight ! Well, I will go back then. But Mrs. Mountjoy will say things to me that will make me wish that I had died with my mother. It is cruel not to be believed when you are telling the truth.”

“ Injustice is the cruellest thing in the world,” answered Mr. Grey. “ But is there not some one in Wrode to whom you could go, if even only for the night ; some one who would not be brutal enough not to believe you ?”

“ Where have I seen you before ?” murmured Georgie. “ I know your face.” Then aloud. “ There is one person who has always been kind to me. One person who I am sure would believe me ; for

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she has a generous nature—Lady Amy Langdon.”

Mr. Chilian Grey, stooping down, picked up Georgie's hat which had fallen to the floor and laid it on the table.

“Mademoiselle,” said he, in an earnest tone, “before you leave this room will you promise, will you *swear* never to reveal what has been disclosed to you? Swear never to tell of how old Chilian Grey turned into a young man? Will you swear?” with deepening intensity.

“Yes,” replied Georgie, trembling. “If it is your wish—I swear it! I will tell nothing of what I have seen and heard here to-night.”

He clasped and gently pressed her hand. There was a bright and winning originality in his manner.

“Yes,” continued Georgie, “I will go to Lady Amy, and cast myself on her

generosity. She will be late at the Mountjoy's dance. I shall not disturb her."

"I will see you safely to your friend's door." He evaded saying Lady Amy's name, but perhaps he had not caught it.

Georgie's fingers, which were fastening the string of her hat, became suddenly still. With dawning recognition she again fixed her blue eyes on his face.

"I have it!" she exclaimed. "I remember you now! You are Mr. Langdon! And Lady Amy has been told that you were at Trouville enjoying yourself—oh! what wicked lies people tell!"

"Who told her such a lie as that?" asked Camille—not denying his identity—while a threatening darkness gathered on his face.

"Mr. Conrady," answered Georgie faintly, frightened at the effect of her

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words, "told Gertrude, and Gertrude told Lady Amy."

Camille laid a French curse on Conrady's black head.

"What does he look like?" asked he, savagely, "is he a big, dark, lumbering fellow?"

"Yes," answered Georgie, "he is."

"I know him then," said Camille, with positive ferocity now. "Hardly a day that he has not passed these windows with *her*! The liar! If you trust me," he continued, in a quite different tone, "so do I trust you."

He seated himself on the sofa beside her, and took her hand in his own, allowing himself more demonstration of inner feeling than a thorough Englishman would have done.

"I trust you quite. Tell me, do you know this. Did Lady Amy take positive

legal steps to be separated from me until she was told, as you say, that I was in Trouville enjoying myself?"

"No," rejoined Georgie, "I heard Gertrude say that she never would have taken the final step, if she had not heard positively where her—where *you* were; and that you were amusing yourself without her. Oh, Mr. Langdon, release me from the promise I have just made to you; let me tell her that you are here—that you have never been in Trouville—for you have not, have you?"

"Not since I married her. But tell me one other thing. This Conrady (*Dieu!* what a name!) is rich, is he not?"

"Very rich."

"And he admires Lady Amy?"

"Yes," answered Georgie, reluctantly, "there is no doubt but what he admires her."

"And she; does she like him, think you?"

"I believe that she hates him," said Georgie, with all the force of conviction.

"He is not well born?"

"No," replied Georgie, positively.  
"Neither well-born nor well-bred."

"Clever?"

"No. He has only one good thing—money. Loads of money. Mr. Langdon, did you hear what I asked you a moment ago? Release me from my promise, let me be the happy person to tell Lady Amy who Mr. Chilian Grey really is."

"No," answered he. "On the contrary I hold you to your word, for to break it would now be of no use. It is too late."

He controlled his voice and features ably; yet Georgie knew that a man spoke to her whose heart was full of

anguish. She looked at him for an instant with mingled admiration and sympathy, then her eyes sought the ground that she might not annoy him by an unsought response to his deep, concealed emotion.

Presently he said with a change of tone and expression. "You have wonderful nerve and self-command, or else the most thoroughly self-forgetting of natures; for your nerves have undergone a great shock to-night, yet you seem to think less of yourself than—of me."

"I assure you," answered Georgie smiling, "I was ready to give you a 'scene' in which tears and nerves would have played a part, when you went out of the room, and on your return, the disclosure that was made to me turned my thoughts into another channel. And now I must go. Oh!" with a half revulsion

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of feeling. "Can I go to Lady Amy Langdon, and throw myself on her compassion?"

"Yes," returned Camille eagerly, "try her."

"You want me to test her goodness of heart, for I see you feel sure it will stand even such a strain as this," said Georgie.

"You read people's thoughts quickly," answered he, opening the door for her. "I shall see you safely housed of course." Georgie thanked him. They went down the stairs of that mysterious abode, Hellmuth Lodge, where had dwelt for months a man about whom all manner of strange explanations, save the right one, had been circulated.

They went out of the door, and emerged into the still, deserted street.

It was now after midnight. The deep

sky above them throbbed with its innumerable stars; the August air was a thousand impalpable, invisible flowers; the adjacent sea, only a sigh, prolonged and profound.

Camille gave Georgie his arm; each felt as if they had known the other for years; so closely and soon can circumstances bind strange hearts friendly together. If, forty-eight hours ago, any one had told Camille that he would have committed words that told his heart's deepest secret to the keeping of one of his wife's sex in his room of Hellmuth Lodge, and with the disguise of months thrown aside—he would have scouted the idea. But these things were verities, nevertheless.

Suddenly a carriage rattled past them.

"There is Amy—I beg her pardon Lady Amy—Bellamy," said Camille.

"How do you know that it is?" asked Georgie.

"I know that brougham very well," he replied with bitter certainty. "She is inside of it," he continued half to himself, "my lovely tormentor, as I have seen her many times; sparkling with jewels, radiant with gratified vanity, bright with the satisfaction of amusing herself well——"

"As she thinks *you* are doing," cut in Georgie quickly.

"This Mr. Conrady," said Camille speaking indistinctly, as though through clenched teeth, "is easily to be found, I take it for granted, wherever Lady Amy Bellamy is to be found?"

"You are not going to do anything—say anything to him!" cried Georgie terrified. "Oh, do not! it was I who told you; oh, I am so unlucky! *please* do not make me feel a breaker of the peace."

"You do not look much like one," said he, "more like a maker of peace than a breaker of it."

"But promise me that you will not try and find him—speak to him?"

"I cannot promise you that," answered Camille, speaking very quickly; but saying in his heart, with all the violence of which he was capable, "I should like to tear his lying tongue out!"

They reached Lady Amy's gate; entered it; walked up the path to the door. The windows of the little drawing-room were still open, out of them floated the sound of voices; it was Lady Amy talking to her maid.

Camille rang, and saying, "I will wait till I know the result outside the gate," would have retreated, but Georgie still held his arm.

"I wish you would come in with me!"



breathed she, low but excitedly. "Come in and see her, your lovely little wife."

She felt a shiver run through him.

"It is too late," he said in a tone of agony she never forgot.

Then he gently released his arm from her clasp, and as Burrard opened the door, he fell back out of sight.

"Good 'eavens!" he heard her say, "Miss Glyn! what in 'eavens name is the matter, Miss?"

"I want to see Lady Amy," said Georgie, "she is still up, is she not?"

"Yes, Miss, her Ladyship's in the drawing-room, 'aving a drop of broth," and she allowed Georgie to enter.

Through the open window, all the words uttered by the two were audible to Camille Langdon.

He heard Georgie simply, clearly tell her story; heard her say:

“Lady Amy, I have come here to throw myself, for a little while, on your generosity. Mrs. Mountjoy dismissed me this morning because I had a number of bon-bon boxes sent me. One by her own son, the others I do not in the least know whom. She would not believe me, when I told her I did not; she said cruel insulting things to me that I may possibly forgive, but I can never forget. I felt so restless and wretched all alone in my little room this evening, while the people were at dinner—their laughs, and voices seemed to mock me—that I wandered out into the grounds, and went out of one gate meaning to go back through the other you know how those gates are?”

Lady Amy, who was speechless with astonishment, nodded.

“I got just between the two,” continued Georgie, “when that—that gentle-

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man who drives the ponies with bells—”

“Oh yes, Mr. Chilian Grey,” cut in Lady Amy promptly.

“Drove over me in some way, or rather his ponies knocked me down.”

“Are you hurt, poor child?”

“No, I am not. Bruised a little, perhaps. But unfortunately I fainted; and he, not knowing in the least where I belonged, took me home with him; revived me—and there I was, at nearly midnight! The thought of going back then to the Mountjoys after all that had taken place this morning, terrified me. I was afraid Mrs. Mountjoy might not even let me in. The only person in the whole world that I could think of, who would be my friend was *you*, Lady Amy. You have been so kind to me always—will you let me stay here to-night?”

“Yes,” answered Lady Amy, taking

her hand. "I have let you tell your story without interrupting you, for I hate interruptions myself. I can tell you who sent you all those bonbonnières—Mr. Blaggrave. He said so to-night; he has been dining at the Mountjoys, there was quite a little scene with him; you have a champion in him, Miss Glyn. Certainly, you shall stay here, not only to-night, but as long as you like."

There were murmured thanks from Georgie; low, because so heartfelt.

The listener, out in the summer night thrilled, shivered, burnt under the influence of that other beloved voice whose accents recalled sensations, thoughts, events, caresses, the like of which he could never experience again. Dear torturing voice, that must never speak his name in its sweetest tones of first love, or whisper fond concessions to his own

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wooing words, or vibrate with love's harsh accompaniment—jealousy. A longing seized him to look in on her—on his loved, lost Amy—lost through both their faults of pride and temper; to see her near once more. He stepped still closer, put his hand through the tendrils of passion-flower that made a trembling frame and lattice around, and across the window, and softly lifting a corner of the blind looked into the little brilliant luxurious room.

His breath came quick and uneven, and cut by emotion as he saw her sitting there, all unconscious of his gaze, with white smooth shoulders gleaming pearly in the candle-light, and round arms, defined in their perfect outline by the vivid rose-coloured dress on which they lay. She was seated in a low black and gold chair, her delicate proud profile thrown

out sharp and clear by the hangings of the wall behind her. Looking from the dense darkness as he did, it all seemed a blaze of rose-colour and blue, and gold, and a confusion of flowers, and birds, and fanciful bright-tinted china. It was maddening. For an instant an impulse clutched him, and he imagined himself springing through the window and catching that brilliant figure in his arms. No; she had been willing to violently sever herself from him, and he had been too proud, and too truly loving to attempt to retain her.

She was lost to him for ever more! He had made her miserable she said, and she had tortured him. Life lay before them to be lived out apart.

The passion-flowers rustled and sighed.

"I will see her dead, before I let her marry another man!" muttered Camille,

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as he moved away and took his road homewards to desolate, gloomy Hellmuth Lodge, where there were no flowers, no bright colours, nor soft lights, nor women.





## CHAPTER XIV.

“ Desolation is a delicate thing :  
It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air.”

“ ND so you have gained your case?” said Lady Rosehew with trembling lips, to her daughter.

“ Yes; there even was no appearance for him. I have gained the case; and” (very low) “loss is all my gain !”

Lady Rosehew was silent for a moment; in truth she was racked by mental pain. As for Lady Amy, she looked the victim



of all humanity's woes. She was gilding a large gipsy-kettle whose object was to hold flowers.

She thrashed it with her brush, and a large tear fell in the pot of liquid gold.

"I think I should have done the same had I been he. I like proud men. It prevented the thing dragging a slow length along too," said Lady Rosehew stoically. A pause. Then: "You are always *gilding*, Amy."

"Yes," with a sigh, "it is something to do."

"Do you think it eases a heart-ache, gilding things?"

"How do you know that I have a heart-ache?" returned her daughter trying to speak in fiery accents, but quite failing.

"I think you must have one. I wish you could have gilded your fortunes."

"Time seems so long," said Lady Amy

drearily, and irrelevantly, "I am so tired of yachting. I am going to try skating, and see what it will do. Perhaps the minutes will go faster on wheels. The Croftons are to teach me in their dining-room first of all. I am to begin this afternoon. But they will be going away soon; everybody is going away."

"Yes; I am thinking of Brighton for a month or so," said Lady Rosehew quietly.

"Oh, mamma!" cried Amy dropping her brush. "Let me go with you; I *implore* you!"

Lady Rosehew shook her head, and an expression of calm determination settled on her face.

"My plan is to take poor little Miss Glyn with me," answered she.

Lady Amy looked unutterably miserable.

"But you surely can take me too," said she imploringly, "oh, mother, forgive and forget, and let me go with you!" She sank down on a chair, and tears rushed to her eyes. "I am so wretched; so tired of living alone!"

"It is"—began Lady Rosehew, when her daughter stopped her by a violent gesture.

"I know what you are going to say—'it is my own fault.' Yes, I know it; but that makes the suffering all the greater."

"But surely you have had some invitations to visit these various people you have known so well this summer—even if our older friends have not asked you?"

A deep, shamed flush rose to Amy's cheeks.

"I have not one invitation," she an-

swered in a low mortified tone. "Not one! Even the Mountjoys have not asked me to go to Coombe Mavis, but then I think that is on account of Miss Glyn; they were very coldly dignified with me yesterday."

"Amy," said her mother steadily, though her own heart answered to the pang of her daughter's, "this is one of the results of your position."

"But I have done nothing," said Lady Amy, nervously biting the end of her brush which she had taken up.

"You must nevertheless take the consequences of the ill-sounding word which is now attached to you. People cannot"—

"I shall go mad!" cried Amy, dropping her brush again; and putting her fingers to her ears she rushed from the room.

Lady Rosehew, left alone, covered her

face with her hands. This, which seemed to her the greatest evil that could befall her, *had* befallen her. Her only child, from whose beauty, and grace, and fascination she had been led to hope so much, to dream such bright dreams, had wrecked herself at one and twenty.

What would the end be? Must she see her married to the plebeian, coarse-natured, rough-mannered Conrady, helping him in his hideous labours to attain a position through his money, to which she could now add her tarnished title? Lady Rosehew contrasting Conrady with Camille, prized Camille, handsome, graceful, clever, well-mannered—as she had never thought to prize him.

She waited some time for her daughter to re-appear; then finding that she did not—rang the bell and told the servant to beg Miss Glyn to come to her.

In a few moments Georgie entered the room. Mental worry, combined with the shock to her system which she had undergone, had made her look worn and pale; but at this minute, her expression was cheerful and hopeful.

"Miss Glyn," began Lady Rosehew, "I have decided to go next week to Brighton, for a month or two, and I shall be very glad indeed to take you with me, if you will come, and do not mind making yourself a little useful."

"Thank you," answered Georgie, with a bright, grateful smile, "but Lady Amy has just been kindly (oh, how kind you both are!) asking me to stay with her; and I was only too thankful to say that I would. I feel as if a heavy weight were taken off my mind and heart. I have been so anxious—but I beg your

pardon ; I must not bore you with my own concerns."

"You do not bore me," answered little Lady Rosehew, kindly. "And I am delighted to hear that you are going to stay with my daughter. Perhaps Lady Amy, too, will come to Brighton, so you will still go with me."

"Oh, thanks. That will be charming. I feel so happy !"

Lady Rosehew stifled a sigh. She almost envied the girl the light heart, which a simple release from harrowing anxiety and foreboding had given her.

"I think you are a sweet-tempered girl. I almost believe you will get on quite peacefully with Amy," said she, half to herself.

"I love Lady Amy," said Georgie softly, "and I shall love her and be grateful to her beyond words, as long as I live."

Lady Rosehew was touched; moreover she was profoundly glad to have this gentle-faced creature her daughter's inmate and companion; it gave her at once a feeling of ease regarding Lady Amy, which she had not felt for months.

If she had not a protector strong of purpose and muscle, she had at least a guardian, strong in affection and purity, and noble in her aims.

Her little ladyship laid a friendly hand on Georgie's shoulder as she bade her farewell, and said a few words which for her were warm and demonstrative.

Then she went home; a wretched woman—defeated in her life's dearest object.

Georgie, seating herself by the window, took out a list, and began writing notes and answering invitations for Lady Amy, so entering on her duties at once.



In about half-an-hour Lady Amy's light footsteps came down the stairs ; and she entered the room singing, with forced—obviously forced—gaiety.

“ Where are you going, my pretty maid,  
I'm going a-rinking, Sir, she said,”

“ And you will stay quietly here, Miss Glyn, writing those things I asked you to write.”

“ Yes, Lady Amy,” answered Georgie, turning to look at her protectress, who, with skirts shortened to the ankle, appeared about twelve years old.

Seeing her glance of admiration, Lady Amy mounted a chair, and stood precariously balancing herself, and looking at herself in one of her many mirrors.

“ One should be very trim for skating ; and I look very trim, do I not ?” she observed, descending with a perilous

carelessness which nearly brought her on her face.

"You are charming!" said Georgie, hastening to help her; "that combination of navy blue, and pale pale blue is perfect. I never saw a prettier dress."

"I am glad you like it," returned Lady Amy, looking gratified. "And now good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Georgie, with her sunshiny smile, "may the greatest success attend your first skating lesson."

Lady Amy then departed. As she drew near the Croftons, she met Mr. Blagrove, who accosted her.

"I was on my way to call on you, Lady Amy," said he, "but as you are not at home——"

"Oh yes, I am," cut in Lady Amy, quickly, "at home by proxy; Miss Glyn is there. As you were actually on your

way to call, pray proceed ; I will not force you to make a second attempt."

"I shall be very glad indeed to see Miss Glyn," answered Blagrove, in a tone of veiled eagerness. "After all that has occurred, I have much to say to her."

"Yes," said Lady Amy, "no doubt you have. Well, you will find her at home now."

"Thanks," said Blagrove, and they bade each other good-morning and parted.

"This is exactly the sort of house I should like to have," said Lady Amy to herself, as she stood in the great vestibule of the Croftons.

It was partly roofed with glass ; and was filled with tropical plants, feathery, branching, deeply green, or veined with burning red.

Tendrils of ivy and graceful vines depended from the roof, and wreathed the

pillars that supported it, a faint sweet scent pervaded the air.

She was shown into a long drawing-room with great windows wide open, and facing the sea. It was a delightful room, its prevailing tint blue; and it was crowded with glowing, rare, and fragile objects arranged so artistically that the whole apartment suggested rather a great artist's picture of an "interior" than a veritable room.

Yet here the bull-dog had his water and bit of sulphur in a beautiful Dresden dish, down on the floor by the fire-place, and his own particular arm-chair—where he was at present comfortably curled up asleep — whose covering he had quite destroyed. That was the charm of the room. It *looked* a room to be respectfully looked at; and it *was* a room to be lived in.

The two fair daughters of the house came forward with matchless grace to greet their guest. Their names were Medora and Helena.

Some one had once said that Sir Peter Lely, in his spiritual studio above, had been allowed to create Medora and send her down on earth, to show that his pictures could have living veri-similitudes; even her hands were the unreally white and slender members that Lely's pictured women please our eyes with.

Helena was as tall and slender as her sister, and in a different way as pretty; but she was quite a nineteenth century young lady, and did not make one think of portraits of her great-great-grandmother.

They soon went into the dining-room, as Lady Amy was evidently impatient to begin. The carpet had been taken up,

the dining-table pushed into a corner, the chairs ranged against the wall.

Madame de Thomé was already there, with skates strapped on her slender helpless feet. Two gentlemen were supporting her as she slid in every position but the right one, over the polished boards.

M. de Thomé stood in a corner with his hair standing straight on end, and watched her.

His hair always bristled quite straight up like a cob's hogged mane, for he had been a Chasseur d'Afrique, and habitually *rasé*; now that his hair was allowed to grow, it grew up, instead of down. It accorded strangely—or rather did not accord at all—with his severely regular features, and grave expression.

Lady Amy, in a great state of excitement, hastened to get skates on; and then with a sylph-like Miss Crofton on either

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side of her, like the supporters of a shield, proceeded energetically to scuttle, flounder, slide—do everything but strike out—over the oak floor.

M. de Thomé, removing his solemn eyes from his slipping, sprawling wife, fixed them on her with an expression of the profoundest compassion.

They both *did* look objects of pity. Out of the perpendicular nearly all the time; now lunging violently forward, their skates scraping sideways; now sinking backwards with ungraceful haste, and displaying all four wheels on one foot; now making a prodigious slide sideways that nearly wrenched them from their supporters' grasp; now walking clatteringly, as if they had pattens on, until their skates ran away with them, and precipitated them into the arms of anybody who was good enough to catch them.

Warm, *warm*, did their labours make them! The very love-lock of Madame la Marquise grew limp and uncurled. Lady Amy pushed her hat away from her hot forehead; it poised itself rakishly on one side, very far back.

An attendant gentleman fanned one of these exhausted skaters "upon a summer's day," Helena Crofton fanned the other.

After a few minutes' respite, they started off again.

The bull-dog, awakened from his slumbers, walked to the open door and looked on with an expression very similar to that of M. de Thomé.

Lady Crofton, a dignified figure in black, came slowly between the blooms of the conservatory opening out of the dining-room, and smilingly surveyed the scene.



The Croftons were to have a dinner-party that evening.

Lady Amy waxing bold and venturesome, insisted on being left to try alone. With her usual recklessness, she made two or three injudicious, frantic slides—and tumbled down.

Helena Crofton rushed to her rescue.

“I feel as if my backbone had come through the top of my head,” whispered Lady Amy to her. “But, never mind, let me try again. Pick me up, please, and set me on my wheels.”

M. de Thomé, who had come forward to her assistance, performed this office for her—of lifting her carefully, and balancing her on her skates; then, at her somewhat forcible insistence, he and Miss Crofton retreated, and left her to stagger on alone.

At this juncture a footman, coming to

the open door, hesitated a moment; then, with a deeply penitential manner, proceeded to cross the room, as if over a red-hot plough-share, and going to the sideboard, began counting some plates, which he had evidently been ordered by the butler to take into the pantry.

Lady Amy, who had managed to reach the table at the end of the room, had clung to it like a wrecked sailor to a plank, until she had regained her breath—now waited eagerly for the footman to be gone, that she might recross the room.

But in a few seconds (patience not being her *forte*), she suddenly started off at a staggering, sliding sort of run, and the footman, at the same instant, began to make off with a pile of plates under his arm.

Result—a scream, a crash—the foot-

man reeling sideways, looking mightily terrified, and Lady Amy down on the floor amidst the wreck of a dozen plates, and liberally strewn with the Crofton coat-of-arms.

Everybody to the rescue. But the hands that raised her were those of a large, dark gentleman, who has just appeared on the scene. Mr. Conrady.

He raised her with eager tenderness; his breath fanned her cheek.

"Are you hurt?" he murmured in her ear. "Are you hurt, my angel?"

"Yes," she answered wresting herself out of his arms. "I am a little. Do take them off—someone."

Mr. Conrady, of course, was the *someone* who eagerly pressed forward, and unbuckled the straps which imprisoned those little feet of hers.

Her hand was badly cut; Medora

Crofton bound it up with tender care.

“And now,” said Lady Amy, “having made myself a bore, and a nuisance, and given as much trouble as I possibly could—broken your china, shaken the nerves of your servant till I daresay he will hardly be able to hold a dish to-night—I will go——”

“Nonsense!” exclaimed both the Miss Croftons. “You have got on beautifully; and it does not matter in the least about James and the plates. You must come again to-morrow, Madame de Thomé is coming. Mr. Conrady, will you come and teach Lady Amy—Bellamy?”

Conrady seized the proposal with avidity. Lady Amy did not rebuff the idea of being helped by him.

She stood with her eyes cast down, listening to him, as he declared with fervour that he would come.

The Croftons made a few caressing speeches to her—ways and words that would have made her madly in love with one or both of them, had she been a man.

Helena ran to the conservatory and brought her a great bunch of Indian jessamine, which she herself loved to that degree that she thought it a compensation for many of the ills of life.

Lady Amy, too, was extravagantly fond of flowers, and received the perfumed snowy stars in the spirit in which they were given.

"May I walk home with you?" asked Conrady.

"If you like," returned she.

"And we will give you the key of the gate leading into the lane," said Miss Crofton. "It is so much pleasanter."

Lady Amy, having agreed to come the

following day, notwithstanding her *contretemps* of this afternoon, went away with Mr. Conrady accompanying her.

They walked through the thick shrubbery, and along devious shady paths leading to the gate, and Conrady said after a pause, and in a tone of smothered vehemence.

"I may speak now. You are Lady Amy Bellamy. I love you madly. I have loved you from the first night I saw you. Be my wife, sweetest, loveliest Lady Amy! I will make your life as happy as devotion, adoration and money can make it."

Lady Amy shuddered; played with her jessamine flowers, and was silent.

"Speak, adored Lady Amy," he loved the title as well as the name, "speak, and end my misery. I've been distracted since I knew you. I have been half mad with the longing to speak to you, as I am

speaking now ; to take you in my arms as I——”

He would have clasped her to him, but she pushed him away.

“You must give me time,” she faltered. “Give me time to think. I cannot answer you now. *No!* do not touch me ; do not try to take my hand.”

But notwithstanding her efforts to release it, he held her little hand firmly in both of his ; looking at her with the fire she herself had kindled, glowing redly in his heavy dark eyes.

“Tell me that you love me,” said he low and thickly.

“Love you ?” murmured she, lower still. “Are you—Camille ?”

“Am I what ?” asked he sharply. “What did you say ? am I what ?”

“I did not wish you to hear what I

said," answered she. "Do not ask me to tell you."

"But tell me that you love me," urged he passionately, and bending over her till contact with her was almost gained.

"I cannot tell you that," said Amy. "I cannot reply to anything you have said to me now. You must give me time to think."

"How long?" said he eagerly. "Till to-morrow?"

"Yes, at least until to-morrow."

"But I may hope? say I may hope."

"You may hope," she answered, with dry, joyless acquiescence. "But say no more of this now. Talk of other things. Tell me of your last new racer, and your last new dog; or of that pavilion you intend building for a billiard-room at Seven Towers. I like hearing of your delightful possessions and plans."



So he talked of *other things* to her ; and they emerged into the lane. They walked up Hill Street together ; past Hellmuth Lodge, and he, talking of other things beside his love, looked at her with the same look that he had fastened on her when he said to her “ I love you.”

Upon reaching her gate, he left her at her request. But he had gained a bit of jessamine from her ; and sticking it proudly in his coat, he went away ; down Hill Street, past the window of Hellmuth Lodge, bearing this white token of his lady's favour.





## CHAPTER XV.

GEORGE AND GEORGIE.

**G**EORGIE sat busily writing communications that required neither protracted penmanship, nor intellectual labour; being mostly regrets and acceptances four lines long.

Having finished them all, she looked among Lady Amy's books in search of something to read. Very contradictory she found the little lady's collection of works. French novels; childrens' picture-

books (destined to have the coloured pictures cut out to help make a screen). Amongst them the translation of a work by J. de Chateau Renard; also "Théorie scientifique de la sensibilité;" and "Les Exploits de Digenis A. Kritas."

She opened this last, wondering very much that Lady Amy should have such a book in her possession.

Written in the fly-leaf in a dashing manly scrawl, was the name,

*Camille Langdon.*

Georgie understood now why the collection of books was so heterogeneous. She replaced "Les Exploits de Digenis A. Kritas," and took up the book translated by the handsome and interesting *incognito* of Hellmuth Lodge, whose looks, words, and voice were ineffaceably impressed on her memory.

She had hardly fixed her mind on the

opening page, when the bell rang; and Mr. Blagrave was announced.

"Lady Amy is not at home," said she, instantly, and in a tone that seemed to deny being "at home" herself.

"I know she is not," he returned, shaking hands with her, and looking at her with pleasant earnestness, "I met her just now, and she said that she was at home 'by proxy;'—that you were here, and that I might come. Miss Glyn, how can I express to you my regret for the annoyance and discomfort I was the most unhappy, unintentional cause of? Those wretched bonbons! can you forgive me for being such an inconsiderate donkey as to send them?"

"It was *not* inconsiderate of you to send them; it was *kind* of you," murmured Georgie, playing with the fringe on her dress, and casting down her eyes.

"You meant to give me pleasure, did you not? And that was kind. But it would have given me far more pleasure if you had sent me *one* box with your name, than *ten* anonymously."

"Would it?" returned he, kindling at the sound of the gracious words and sympathetic voice. "I am glad of that. If I had not been furiously jealous at hearing from Lily that you had eleven boxes, I should have come and spoken to you that afternoon, and perhaps all would have been explained. Then you would have been saved what you were obliged to endure."

"But good came out of evil," said Georgie, anxious to mollify his deep concern and annoyance, "for I am to stay with Lady Amy as her companion, and am a thousand times happier than if I had not left Mrs. Mountjoy. Dear, kind,

generous Lady Amy. How is it, Mr. Blgrave, that you and she have not been more friends together? I should have fancied that you would suit her, and she would suit you."

"Lady Amy seemed to be unutterably bored by me when I first called on her; and as I stayed exactly fifteen minutes—not a second more—I concluded that I had better not inflict my society on her in future. Miss Glyn—"

Georgie almost started at his suddenly changed tone. What was he going to say? A delicious faint tremor shook her. She raised her tender blue eyes inquiringly to his; then dropped them suddenly as she met the gaze that he bent on her.

"Miss Glyn, do you think tenderly of Lady Amy Langdon simply because she gives you a home? If I dared ask you to make a home for me, a happiness for

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me, an intensely desired happiness and home for me, what would you say?"

He caught a deep breath, and stopped abruptly.

Georgie, with suddenly crimsoned cheeks, opened tremulous lips from which no sound issued.

"Would you say to me, 'you are a visionary, half-invalidish fellow, with nothing to recommend you but having painted a picture or two worth looking at, written a verse or two worth reading, out of many failures with brush and pen?'"

"No," answered Georgie, softly, "I should not say that."

He seated himself nearer to her, and touched her hand with his.

"I love you," said he, with passion-fraught simplicity.

"Do you?" returned Georgie, in a low,

trembling tone, and with quickened breathing. "If I were prettier, I could understand then, how you might overlook——"

He stopped her by bringing his face nearer hers.

"Do not go on," said he. Prettier? How could you be? I've never had an impossible ideal with classic features, dark eyes and golden hair, or any other fanciful combination of blonde and brunette tints. But I have an ideal *now*; she has a countenance so pure and calm, it suggests the thought that she must have been born without original sin. When she is serious and silent, it is as if she were making an inward prayer. When she speaks and smiles, she looks as if she were diffusing 'sweetness and light.' Do you know who realizes this ideal? You do, sweetest one."



All "sweetness and light" grew Georgie's face at his words.

"But you are so clever," whispered she, while I am just the reverse."

"Your manner gives charm and interest to everything you say, it is not what you say, but the way you say it;" returned he, with an answering brightness of expression, "but I am not going to dwell on your perfections unless—they are to be *mine*! if they are not to be, let me forget that they exist in the person of the only woman who shall ever be my wife."

Georgie's answer though only given with her eyes, and a slight, very slight, but bewitching gesture, seemed to possess convincing eloquence to George Blagrove, for in a moment she was pressed, trembling, against his heart; her blue eyes dim with happy tears, her lips half shrinking from the caress his gave.

If the bright walls of the little room had enclosed a heart tortured by the pangs of a long defeated love, they now environed two hearts beating in happy love-unison, surcharged with the glory of a moment, the brightest their lives would ever know, the sweetest their souls would ever experience.

Her fair and silken hair was under his still youthful cheek ; and his lips framed faint words that steeped her young, untried spirit in a joy that was merged into delicious shame, as his whispered syllables died away in a long, passionately loving kiss.

Lady Amy's favourite flowers, the passion-flowers, rustled with what seemed to Georgie a long familiar sound. Mingling with their purple-hearted paleness, were starry jessamine blooms, white as a swooned woman's cheek, and

sweet as the memory of a lost first love.

In a very short space of time—indeed before the minute hand of the clock had travelled from twelve to one, these two started apart at the sound of footsteps.

Presently a servant had entered with tea on a gay Moorish tray, which she deposited on the table, and then quietly retreated; not in such deep ignorance of how affairs stood as the young pair supposed.

Lady Amy had remembered to order tea for her new little companion before leaving the house.

“This is like dear Lady Amy,” said Georgie, “she is wonderfully thoughtful in little things. I should not have ordered tea for myself; *she* remembered me!”

“It is a pity that she could not get on with her husband; if he is the man I think

he is, he has a remarkably handsome face."

"Very handsome," coincided Georgie heartily. "But where did you see him? I did not know you had ever seen him?"

"I have only seen him once; that was in Paris, last March. He came to say good-bye to a man—a friend of his, and mine too. Denarié was not at home. I was in his room, and this Langdon gave me his name, and a message for Denarié."

"What was the message, if I may ask?"

"As if you could not ask me anything, my Una—the message was simply a message of farewell, as he was off in an hour or two for England. His return doubtful, I believe he added. By Jove, how overwrought and ill he looked; more fit for a sick-room than a Channel packet."

"Strange," said Georgie, with a look of deep interest.

"And now, to return your question, where did *you* see him?"

Georgie flushed strangely enough as it appeared to him.

"In Paris," she said stammeringly, "at least"——

But she never finished her sentence, for she was cut short by Lady Amy suddenly entering the open door; they had been quite unaware of her approach.

She looked pale and haggard to a degree that startled Georgie, who hastened to give her a cup of tea, as she sank down in a chair with an air of utter exhaustion.

"Was the skating lesson a success, dear Lady Amy?" asked Georgie.

"No—yes;—I am tired, so tired!" answered Amy as if intensely weary.

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Upon this George Blagrove—after waiting a civil moment that she might not think he took her words as an intimation to go—rose up and said adieu to her and the woman who had won him.

As he shook hands with Georgie, he murmured, "I shall see you to-morrow; and I shall speak to Lady Amy."

Then he went.

Lady Amy sat perfectly still; with a look of such utter wretchedness, that it dimmed Georgie's new-found happiness. She was very silent. Georgie, after one or two ineffectual attempts at conversation, desisted, and left her to her own painful thoughts—for, too evidently they were painful.

After a while she rose, and went up to her room to dress for a dinner party to which she had been asked that night to meet a very celebrated man

of science, and his newly married wife. As the time drew near for her to go, Georgie went to the half open door of her room.

"May I come in and admire you?" asked she, with her usual pretty timidity of manner.

"Yes, if you like," answered a dejected voice, very hard to recognize as Lady Amy Bellamy's.

Georgie entered; and found her alone; with the same drooping, hopelessly miserable aspect that she had worn when downstairs.

"I am afraid you have over-tired yourself, Lady Amy," said Georgie, after admiring her dress and appearance.

"I *am* tired;" answered Amy. "So tired that I feel as though I could never be rested again. But how happy—how *very* happy you look, Miss Glyn. Ah!

I know why. Tell me, dear child, are you not engaged to handsome, poetic Mr. Blgrave?"

"Almost," answered Georgie blushing deeply.

"Quite, I think," said Lady Amy, kissing her cheek with something of her old impulsive manner. "I am selfish enough to be sorry, for I like having you with me; there is a sense of rest and comfort to me, in knowing that I have one sympathetic and true friend to turn to; who will neither mourn over me nor lecture me, as mamma does, nor torment me as Gertrude Mountjoy does, with all her pretended friendliness; and with whom I need force no gaiety of manner—a gaiety Heaven knows I am far from feeling! I am sorry—oh dear! so sorry that I am to lose you!"

"Do you think that I would leave you,



as long as you wished me to stay?" said Georgie warmly. "Indeed you shall not lose me, if you care to keep me."

"Well! I will have a talk with Mr. Blgrave to-morrow; perhaps to-night, for he may be at the Carnacs. The carriage? yes, yes, Burrard. My cloak. Good-bye, Georgie—I mean to call you Georgie."

"Do," answered Georgie. "It will endear my own name to me. Good-bye, Lady Amy."

END OF VOL. I.

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